

# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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## *Two Men o' Mendip.*

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QUIET LIFE,' 'TRYPHENA IN LOVE,' &c.

### CHAPTER I.

#### LITTLE PATTY WINTERHEAD.

WHEN little Patty Winterhead took to talking, how she would go on, to be sure! No matter what came into the head of her, out it popped as straight as a gun-barrel. She didn't keep anything back—not she—not for the time being. But then again, sometimes, when all the folk were cackling away like a charm of birds, Patty Winterhead would sit so silent as a mumchance, and never so much as speak one word.

This afternoon there was no stopping her. Her tongue—'the little red rag o' her,' as Sophia Pierce would have called it—ran nineteen to the dozen and more. But that her prattle was too sweet to injure any living creature on God's earth, she could have talked a horse's hind leg off, as the saying is. And still, for all that, little Patty Winterhead had never been known to say a sour thing, or tell an unkind tale, of any mortal soul. But, then, people upon this earth are all so different-like—some for everlasting *nag, nag, nag*, and some that can never so much as ope their lips but what the words must drop out smiling.

They were standing together in the porch of Charterhouse Farm, little Patty Winterhead and Sophia Pierce.

'What! not heard the goo-koo afore to-year?' cried Patty in

astonishment. 'Why, I heard un more 'an a week agone, first time! An' over Ubley way, too, then.'

'I ha'n't a-noticed un myself,' replied Sophia with a sniff, and all the superiority of a fine commonplace mind having other things to think about.

Sophia was born and bred at Ubley farm.

That bright April afternoon she had walked over to Charterhouse for company's sake; the more so because Patty Winterhead was alone too, and of late Sophia had taken a great fancy to Patty. The day was a holiday. All the folk were gone abroad. Across the breadth of Mendip neither man nor woman was to be seen—nor even a horse, for the matter of that, unless some rough unbroken colt, maybe, that none could ride. A mount had been worth money that morning, when he who neither had nor was able to hire must rise at daybreak and tramp his score of miles and more to be in time for the fun. Every miner from Priddy on the one hand up to Shipham on the other had gone to fair that day. And so for certain had all the quiet farming folk as well.

'There, to be sure, summer is a'most come now; for not only the swallows but the devil-scratches so well be all back. Look! Sophia, there's one o' 'em—there—now.'

Patty Winterhead raised her finger and pointed across the narrow garden in front of the house at a swift, glistening black in the sunlight, as it darted down the road between the long stone walls which serve instead of hedgerows in that bleak hill country.

Sophia looked without seeing, as one who has no mind for such nonsense, and little Patty Winterhead went rattling on again.

'Ay, summer's a'most here, sure enough. Not but what the nights be cold, mind. Why, early 'is morning the moors were all over wi' a white vrost like a ground o' snow. For a'ter vather had a-rod off I went away right up 'pon top o' Cheddar Hill. La! Sophia, you never zeed sich a sight o' folk. I never did. All along the road, in twos an' drees, an' vowers an' vives, some a-voot an' some a-ho'se-back, an' some in carts. Ay, up ten or a dozen to a two-wheel cart, a-zot, anyhow, 'pon one another's laps. There 'tes really a merciful providence that 't have a-held up same as 't have. For there were a black cloud or two, middle day; did really make me wonder whe'er or no I'd put on my light vrock. There, I did. For you zee, Sophia, when vather do go out there's no knowing but what all creation mid come home wi'

un. Why, when Gerrish the highwayman was hanged in 1810, that's dree years agoe this very spring, there were thirteen o' us a-zot down together, an' none dared to move. I tell ee 't was lucky Solomon Moggridge the constable comed along late, else we should ha' bin there now, I do verily believe, please God to spare us so long. An' Cheddar Fair, when young Giles Standerwick cracked the crown o' the champion from down the country, there were one-an'-twenty. For 'tis "Come along, come in," wi' vather—open heart—open house an' everybeddy well met. Zo, look-y-zee, I've a-tidied up a bit, an' filled the kettle so full up as ever you dare, that is to say, not to boil over an' spout out an' scald anybeddy's knees, or a'most drown the whole place, so to speak; and hitched un up on chimbley-crook, han'-pat again he's wanted, an' put on my best vrock, or what have a-bin my best, an' here we be.'

She stopped abruptly, not for lack of matter, but because she was out of breath. She leaned back against one side of the arch and laughed. Sophia was leaning back against the other.

In appearance they were wide apart as a last year's kecksie from a Cheddar pink.

Little Patty Winterhead was rightly named. She was very small—short in stature, slight in figure, and little in limb. Only her eyes were large and very round and brown. Her honey-coloured hair fell parted over her forehead above brows ever so slightly arched. And her skin was delicate and white, except when she talked and grew excited. Then the colour rose upon her cheek, and a mischief went twitching around the little crimson mouth of her.

The plain, unimaginative folk of those bleak hills did not understand the maid. She was as changeable as the wind, they said, and had as many moods. Yet when she sat silent she was watching, no fear, and drank in all that was said and done like milk, though she never might move a lip. This strange uncertainty made people shy. They thought of her as a child with an uncommon wayward wit. And indeed, as she stood there in her pale cream-coloured frock, covered with a spring-time of lilac sprigs, she looked no more than seventeen at the most. Yet little Patty Winterhead was over twenty, and going on for twenty-one.

As to Sophia Pierce, she was tall as a maypole and hard as a nail. She had high cheek-bones, a dark complexion, and black hair. Her long face was thin and sharp as a hatchet, with a

prominent chin and a nose like a reaping hook. Still, Sophia was not altogether bad-looking, and, as everybody knew, had gumption enough for two. But that being strictly in the nature of things was much to be commended, since Sophia was getting to be a very old girl. Nobody thought of *her* as young. People only wondered why somebody or another hadn't picked her up years ago. Ah! she'd a-made a good wife for any sensible man, sure enough. And what an arm she had for work! And what any eye—to business!

At present she was in black for an uncle by her mother's side who had left her a hundred pounds.

'Let's go up along road an' zee if anybeddy is a-coming,' suddenly cried the younger girl in her quick, impulsive way. 'Or, no! let's run down over hill so fur as the Cheddar road. Why, the primroses an' cowslips too be out beautiful in the lew between Black-rocks. Anybeddy can pick a ton, well, a goodish double han'ful then, enough to fill a quart cup in ten minutes, if they do try, an' some o' 'em so big as oxslips too.'

'La! Patty Winterhead, I should want to be paid to pick 'em,' laughed Sophia in her short way. 'An maybe your vather 'ull come home, too, an' not like to vind ee out o' the way.'

'Ho! he wouldn't trouble his head about that, so long as I comed in sound an' happy. Why, he've never found a word o' fau't wi' me in all his life!' boasted the girl gaily.

'What! never once in all his life, Patty Winterhead?'

As she spoke Sophia leant forward, and her voice assumed a searching tone calculated to drag hidden truth from the innermost recess of the deepest human heart.

Patty reflected.

'Well, then,' she said, nodding her head with the deliberation of one determined to be exact and stick to it, 'not since poor mother were a-tookt, an' that's six year agone just upon next Midsummer that ever is.'

For a moment she was serious. Then she burst out again.

'Look here! Let's run down an' climb up 'pon top o' the Wind Cliff an' look down over. The folk a-horseback crawling up the road do look so small as mites—well, the size o' house-sparrows, then, a-perched upon rats wi' their tails a-cut short. Why, a Devon cow out 'pon moor is about so big as a horse-chestnut. You can look down 'pon the backs o' the jackdaws a-flying in an' out the chinks; an' ofttimes there's a great hunting falcon-hawk, wi' broad wings all a-spread, up five foot or more



across, a-sailing roun' so smooth an' easy—verily an' truly! do a'most make anybeddy believe that, wi' the leastest bit of a push like, you need only to stick out your arms to fly too. Come on.'

'I wunt,' was the reply of Sophia, sharp and decisive. 'Why 'tis wo'th all a crown to get up there any day o' the wick.'

The young girl laughed merrily. Her nimbler wit could follow Sophia's simple astonishment, but Sophia did not understand her in the least. Then her capricious little mind leapt back abruptly to her father.

'No; I think 'twould break the heart o' me if vather an' I were ever to fall out. There! we never couldn'. Not but what vather, mind, have a-got a pretty hot temper when he's crossed. But all the Winterheads be like that. A Winterhead have a-got to have his way an' then he's all right. But a Winterhead is always so good as his word. That's his pride—to act up to what's right no matter how mid turn out. Why, wi' forty thousand against un vather 'ud speak out his mind just the same. I tell ee what, Sophia, I'd believe my vather in the face o' all the world.'

As she spoke she stepped out upon the path. What between pride and affection her small, slight figure looked quite defiant.

Sophia's eyes watched her narrowly. Then her voice became quite coaxing as she said:

'He do think a wonderful lot o' you, Patty. Shall I tell ee what he said over to Ubley two nights agone?'

'What?' cried the girl, eagerly turning back into the porch.

'He said the wish nearest to his heart is to see ee wed an' happy wi' a good man o' your own choice.'

Little Patty Winterhead blushed and laughed.

'What good is it to talk o' that?' she cried, looking frankly up into Sophia's face. 'Why, I be one-an'-twenty come Old Midsummer Day! None o' 'em ha'n't a-caught a mind to me, nor ever so much as pretend to, not eet. 'Tis because I be so little, I do allot. I tell ee what 'tis, Sophia. I do bide heart-whole myself, an' the young chaps do bide heart-whole too for all me. But I don't trouble. I be happy enough as 'tis.'

'Well, I thought I'd tell ee what he said,' added Sophia complacently.

Such friendliness naturally kindled in little Patty Winterhead's open nature a burning desire to impart a confidence. She could no more help herself than fly.

'Sophia,' she began in a mysterious whisper. 'If you'll take

your Bible oath never to let out, I'll tell ee what I ha'n't never a-breathed to any soul alive.'

'What's that?' demanded Sophia, sharp-set with curiosity.

'Vather is so fond o' me as ever his heart can hold. I do know that. When poor dear mother was handy her last end she begged of him never to give another mother to "the little mouse." That's what they always called me ever since I was knee-high. An' he promised he wouldn'. That's why he never thought o' marrying again. So 'tis all so well that nobody don't want me, to be sure, for there, I couldn' never leave vather for no man 'pon earth. Unless, in cou'se, it so turned out that we all lived here together, or——'

She broke off abruptly. Sophia was craning forward her lean neck as she drank in every word with greedy interest. A mis-giving crossed Patty Winterhead's mind that she was talking foolishly. That was the way sometimes when she ran on so fast without thought, to be sorry for it afterwards.

'There, come on!' she cried impulsively, seizing Sophia by the wrist. 'Let's go out to gate and look up an' down road a bit.'

To so short an excursion Sophia could raise no objection, and arm in arm they strolled along the garden path. To right or left no one was in sight, and Sophia stood with her back against the gate and looked at Charterhouse. She ran her eye over the whole homestead with the alertness of an appraiser.

Afternoon was growing towards evening. The sun, hanging just above the hill, shone upon the front and pointing end of the old house like a smile of prosperity. It lit the sides of the double row of stacks in the mow-barton with a gleam of gold. There were ten in all. Sophia saw that at a glance. Sure enough it was a fine old place, with its porch as big as a cottage a-most, its great square diamond-paned windows and the little pointed arch in the end wall at which people sometimes stopped to look. She had seen it before hundreds of times. Once was enough for Sophia for a thing of that sort, so as to be able to say she had seen it, instead of having to sit and gape when other folk talked. But to-day a momentary romance, bright as the evening sunlight, yet somewhat sad, fell unbeknown upon her elderly heart. Her romance was a dream of excellent management. She pictured herself the mistress of such a house; to have been wed in a well-to-do way, to work for herself, and never to waste so much as a straw, instead of living at home to be nobody and working for her father for neither pay nor thanks. It was in the blood of a

Pierce to get money, and Sophia was a perfect Pierce. The ivy ought to be seen to where it was pushing over the roof—nasty crawling stuff, only fit to harbour snails and for sparrows to build in. In the grass ground beyond the barton stood a rick of old hay—five-and-twenty tons or more, Sophia would be bound. John Winterhead must be laying by year by year. And to think he had nobody in the world but that little feather-brained Patty! Sophia had lived long enough to learn that life is hard and uneven. She felt envious.

All the while Patty unheeded went talking on.

She had got a new frock never yet seen on. Well, verily and truly, quite so good as new. For Patty wore after Aunt Maria, who was really a-most so big as a house, and her gowns so voluminous that when the rubbed places were taken out, there was plenty enough left to make for Patty, without skimping one morsel-bit. And Patty herself was never the maid to be hard on clothes. So soon as ever a body began to show shiny under the arms she sent it on to Cousin Selina to be cut up for the chieils. Such was Aunt Maria's wish impressively stated, because there were so many, you see, an' all wi' mouths to fill. And Patty was the soul of honour, doing towards Cousin Selina as she had a right to expect that Aunt Maria would do towards her. All of which, though Sophia heard none of it, must be taken to prove that the Winterheads of Charterhouse were a respectable race, with relations both rich and poor, and the double advantage of deriving lustre from one side, whilst upon the other they received respect.

'Harky, then! What's that?'

As Sophia spoke she turned quickly towards the road. 'There's somebody about,' she added, lowering her voice to a whisper. Then they both watched and listened.

Scarcely were the words uttered, when a short distance away a man came clambering over a shard in the wall by the roadside. One moment he stood tottering on the loose stones, balancing himself with outstretched arms, then leapt heavily upon the rough waste by the wayside with so little heed that he almost fell.

'Some drunken groover, up to no good, you may be sure, or he wouldn't be about when every Kerstin soul is far away. He—he's coming this way.'

As she spoke, in alarm Sophia drew back a step from the gate.

Patty Winterhead raised one hand to her forehead and peered at this unexpected new-comer who had broken in so suddenly upon

her talk. With hasty steps he came striding towards them, but now and again reeled half way across the road, and then, as by an effort of will, recovered himself.

'Tis the young—the young Standerwick—son o' the man that's hanged,' stammered Patty Winterhead, and her face became very white. 'Stand more back, Sophia. Don't let un see us. Come back here behind the lilac bushes out o' sight till he've a-passed by. He must ha' come away to once to be here so soon a-foot. Poor fellow. Come in close, Sophia, do.'

They hid beneath the broad leaves and sweet-smelling blossoms.

The young groover—for so the miners of those days were called—came on apace.

In the first flush of early manhood, well grown, tall and straight, at most he could be no more than three-and-twenty years of age. For a long while he had been a celebrity in that neighbourhood, and was well known by sight to the girls who now watched him unobserved between the bushes. Not a feast or revel within ten miles, but he was there—the prettiest cudgel-player in the county. Not a hearth upon the hills that had not heard his praises. For next to money, above everything on earth, the frugal yeomen loved sport, and men game enough to stand up and show it. In their minds the young Giles Standerwick stood apart from the race of wild miners of whom law-abiding folk went in awe. 'Odds rabbit un' he's so quick's a bird. Got a eye like a hawk,' they said, and agreed in adding the highest praise that Somersetshire tongue can utter; they never didn' hear so much as a word agen the man in all their lives.

So for Patty Winterhead this young gamester was already a romantic figure.

'He's close handy,' she breathed in Sophia's ear as he passed; and she thrust her head further between the boughs.

The change that had taken place in young Giles Standerwick since she saw him on the platform so alert and triumphant last Cheddar winter fair startled her.

Dressed in an old suit of rusty black, he staggered on, looking neither to right nor left. One of his sleeves was torn. Somewhere in his course across country—pushing his way through a thorn hedge or leaping a rhine on the moor—he had lost his hat. His head was bent forward. His black hair had fallen over his forehead. His teeth were clenched and his features, formerly fine and sharp, looked thick and swollen. He was a man distraught—

beside himself. And on and on he went, fleeing in vain from his own wretchedness.

At sight of this overwhelming passion the girl was afraid. Such tragedy was far removed from her own quiet life, and she shrank in terror from the sight of it. It overawed her, like the flash and thunder of a distant tempest over the hills. But for the presence of Sophia, she would have run indoors out of the way; just as she always ran to hide in the milk-house when it lightned. People laughed, but still she did it just the same. For when something touches you deep down within, and the soul shivers, neither thinking nor words can alter that.

'I wish I'd never seen un,' she cried, with strong emotion. 'I can't bear to think o' it. Poor man! I do pity un.'

'Then I don't,' replied Sophia shortly, her eyes still fixed upon the turn of the road where Giles Standerwick had disappeared.

'But 'tis his vather, Sophia.'

Little Patty Winterhead turned away to conceal her tears.

'Well, folk should be honest and live respectable. They groovers do earn money enough in all conscience, more than steady folk. Why, they do get up a poun' a day when they do meet wi' luck, so 'tis said.'

'But 'tis terrible to think o', Sophia. An' he've a-done no harm anyway.'

Sophia snorted contempt of such weak-mindedness.

'They be all alike—a wild, drinking, fighting lot,' she cried. 'A good thing there's one the less o' 'em. An' what have it got to do wi' you?'

What could it have to do with little Patty Winterhead, happy and safe in that quiet prosperous homestead from which passion and sorrow were as far removed as shipwreck? Certain of the soundness of her argument, and realising that no more was to be seen, Sophia turned round.

'Why, you silly thing, you be all to a tremble,' she said. 'An' look-y zee the green off the laylock boughs is on your vrock, an' on your cheek too. But hearken then! I do hear horses!'

Patty was too disturbed and too angry with Sophia's want of heart to answer. It was a relief to stand silent, listening to the clatter of distant hoofs.

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## CHAPTER II.

## AROUND THE HEARTH.

'THAT'S vather,' cried Patty Winterhead with sudden delight. 'I can tell the mare's step up a mile away. Harky, Sophia! I do know the beat o' everybeddy's nag round about here. That's Solomon Moggridge the constable's cob. He do clacky just-about, an' shoeing can't cure un. An' there's your vather's old pony too, Sophia—*dree-ha'pence an' tuppence, dree-ha'pence an' tuppence*—but there, he's five-an'-thirty year old, an' nothing 'pon earth can't cure that.'

'Then now we shall hear all about it,' responded Sophia, too expectant of news to dispute about facts.

Patty was right. Far away between the straight stone walls three horsemen were already in sight. In her excitement she ran into the road, and stood with her hand raised to shade her eyes from the setting sun. Her father was riding by himself in front. Next trotted great Solomon Moggridge, the constable, and, by his side little Joey Pierce on his broken-kneed pony, cantering to keep up. A few lengths behind appeared long Jims Matravis, and one o' Cheddar, and three or four o' Blagdon. Heart alive! There was to be company to-night, then, sure enough.

But the girl had no eyes for any but her father. As she watched him at the head of the nondescript regiment of neighbours which his spirit of hospitality had enlisted, her heart glowed with pride. Taller than any, and also mounted on a higher horse, to her mind he made the rest look mean; for he bore a finer countenance, and something within told her that he was a better man.

'Hullo, little mouse!' he cried with a rough tenderness as he drew rein before the gate. 'What? Peeping out o' your hole, then?'

She stepped forward to stroke the glossy neck and brown muzzle of the mare.

'There, take her along, if that's what you do want,' he told her, with an affectation of indulgence; and, springing from the saddle, he slipped the rein under the stirrup-strap and stood aside.

The mare reached out her head as if to bite, but only kissed the girl's shoulder.



'Cup, Cup,' called Patty, holding out her hand. And the mare followed her like a dog.

'There, Constable Moggridge! There, Joseph Pierce!' shouted John Winterhead in his strong, hearty voice. 'There's a sight for sore eyes. You won't see the like of her, no, not in five-an'-twenty mile. Good as gold, an' a temper, well! like an angel.'

He wore corduroy breeches, and a blue swallow-tail coat with brass buttons. His whip under his arm, his legs slightly apart, he stood six feet two in his top-boots, a man every inch of him, in the very prime of life, and firm and sound as an oak tree. And he was proud too. There was pride in the way he glanced around at the company and pride in the way he eyed the mare. To him, everything his was best, and so he was contented.

Born and bred in the old homestead close by, he dreamt of nothing better than to live and die there, when his time should come, and leave land and money to the little maid, and a good name behind him, as the Winterheads had always done. For him no place was so good as Charterhouse, and no name so good as Winterhead. Body and soul he lived on these traditions, and they made his life complete; for the land grew the row of golden stacks, and John Winterhead, like his father before him, 'owed no man money once asked for.' That was a maxim of his race.

He took off his low beaver hat, for his forehead was moist with riding. His features were strong, and his frank clean-shaven face wore an air of honest prosperity. Not a trace of grey was mingled with his crisp brown hair.

Patty was right. In his presence the neighbours became insignificant both in look and speech.

'Ha! ha!' chuckled little Joey Pierce in his grasping way. He could never talk of property except in a sly guttural sort of voice that sounded avaricious. 'Ah! She'd vetch money, Mr. Winterhead. A lot o' money she'd vetch.' He half shut the little grey eyes that gleamed under his bushy eyebrows, and pulled at his short grizzly beard.

'Haw! haw!' roared great Solomon Moggridge. He laid the rein on his cob's neck, set his arms akimbo, and laughed loud enough to burst any but lungs of leather. 'If I didn't think Mr. John Winterhead meant the little maid. 'Pon my life, I did then, sure.' And he looked from one to another, greatly gratified to find he had made this mistake.

Nature had blessed Solomon with a good disposition and a flat fallow-field of a face, which art had fenced around with a hedgerow



of ragged whisker. Never in his life had he been known to apprehend anything aright—not even a criminal. That was what made him such a good quiet man for constable. He could be trusted not to see too much, not to raise strife, nor to stir up bad blood, nor to go poking his nose where he had no call to. And so, year after year, Solomon was unanimously elected, and enjoyed life well, and gave great satisfaction.

‘Come then, all o’ ee,’ cried John Winterhead heartily. ‘Come, you lazy Blagdon chaps, hop off, hitch up your nags in the cow-stall, one an’ all, an’ come in. You do know the way well enough. But help yourselves you must, for every mother’s son’s away but one, an’ he’s down wi’ the cows. I do give ’em the day, little an’ big, to encourage honesty. Come on so quick as you can, an’ find out what’s best in Charterhouse.’

Some little diffidence seemed to withhold the party. Nothing serious of course, but quite enough for good manners. Perhaps it would be all so well to get home afore dark. Perhaps it might be better to come some other night. Perhaps——

‘If you don’t come when you be asked, don’t ee never dare to come without asking.’

This threat settled the matter entirely. As John Winterhead uttered it, he hospitably held open the barton gate, and the visitors hurried through like sheep.

‘Come along then, be sprack,’ he shouted good humouredly, and presently led the way into the house for the merriest jolliest company that ever rode home together from Ilchester Hang Fair.

Dusk was now beginning to creep into the kitchen, although it was still light outside. The room was low but very large, with a great square window having diamond panes of greenish-coloured glass. Across one of them had been scrawled aslant the name ‘*John Winterhead, 1720*’—the signature of the old navigator, it was said, who brought home much money from abroad and bought the place more than a hundred years ago. Greatly did the Winterheads value this tradition; and times out of number had John Winterhead boisterously affirmed that he wouldn’t have the pane a-brokt—no, not for a five-pound note. The tall eight-day clock in the corner, the great settle shutting the draught from the door away from the great open fireplace, the black beams across the ceiling were all of oak, very old and dark. This was before the days of gimcracks. Every ornament was either a relic, like the buccaneer’s old pair of pistols hanging like cross-bones upon the chimney-board, or a thing of use judiciously displayed, like the

bladders against the wall or the couple of hams hooked up to the beam. There was also a small bookcase, with a shelf half filled with leaning volumes bound in calf.

'Come then, little mouse, bring on a han'ful o' dry sticks, an' put out whatever you've agot to eat. An' zit down all o' ee. Don't stand about an' wait for words. Come, Jims Matravis; come, Mr. Pierce, you be too old to be shy. There, get into the corner, both o' ee, an' zit yourselves down out o' the way.'

The wood fire sprang into a sudden blaze. Admonished and cheered, the guests began to shuffle into places. One o' Cheddar and one o' Blagdon on the settle. Two o' Blagdon in the left-hand chimney-corner, and James Matravis and little Joey Pierce on the opposite side, as they had been told. Their faces glowed with expectation as the little mouse crept in and lowered the kettle.

But at the outset, a most unfortunate incident threatened to disturb the harmony of the evening.

Great Solomon Moggridge was left standing in doubt. Too polite to take Mr. John Winterhead's own chair, he drew his broad hand across his wide flat forehead and thought. Certainly Jims Matravis was so lean as a rail, and little Joey Pierce was but a tom-tit of a man, look at him as you would. So Solomon stepped in and wedged himself down between these two. Nothing in the world, except the walls of Charterhouse, could withstand his weight, and little Joey Pierce gave a shriek of mingled rage and pain.

'You girt vlat-vooted, gorbelly, stunpole, Zolomon Moggridge,' he yelled, louder and louder with each word, 'you've a-squot I so vlat as a dough-fig.'

Solomon slowly rose, looked round in perplexity, and apologetically pulled his tow-coloured whisker.

'Pon the life o' me, then,' he explained, in blushing confusion, 'I never didn' think but what there were room.'

'Think!' cried little Joey Pierce, so spiteful as a toad. 'You can't think, you girt yaller-headed calf.' And he stood up and limped out in front the better to rub his hurt huckle.

The three o' Blagdon chuckled; Jims Matravis laughed outright, but John Winterhead frowned.

Solomon Moggridge scratched his head and searched for a retort. Ten minutes afterwards he found one, but that was too late.

Now Joey Pierce was a nervous little man, and to see Solomon standing there so ignorant like had more power to irritate him

than the neatest answer on earth. 'Zo you be,' he cried in a still louder voice, 'an' no more fit to be a constable than my wold hat.'

'Enough said! Enough said!' interposed Mr. John Winterhead sternly. For it is one thing to call a friend a stunpole, even embellished with adjectives, and hard names break no bones; but to attack a man in his own office is very unneighbourly behaviour, and a horse of quite a different colour.

So Jims Matravis's laugh fell flat, the smiles faded from the faces of the three o' Blagdon, and little Joey Pierce limped back into his corner and sat glum under the rebuke. From these simpler folk such deference was due by right to the masterful character which must speak its mind outright, without fear or favour, indoors and out.

The silence which followed was but brief. In a moment John Winterhead regained his good humour.

'There, friends all. Bring along the jar, little mouse, an' some glasses. Drown ill-will an' hard words. Sit down, Solomon, where you can. There's a wheaten loaf an' cheese, so help yourselves all o' ee. An' pull up the settle an draw closer round. Do turn off cold at dark here on the hills. An' bring on some pipes, Patty, there's a good maid.'

The effect was instantaneous. Everybody became merry again, and even the kettle began to boil. As John Winterhead drew the cork, every eye winked at its next door neighbour. A delicate odour filled the whole kitchen, and made little Joey Pierce sniff. Well enough he knew the smell of a toothful o' moonshine, and liked it the better because no duty had been paid. It did his heart good to know that anybody had been cheated except himself.

'Say when,' cried John Winterhead, as he went round with the kettle.

'When,' laughed Solomon.

'When,' croaked little Joey Pierce.

Thus all differences became covered by the flowing tide of hospitality, yet not altogether forgotten. An underlying sympathy held with Solomon Moggridge. Of course it did. To be called a stunpole about a trifle of that sort. And if Solomon was not so very nimble-tongued, he was at least good-natured.

Sophia had slipped away unbeknown to get home before nightfall. The little mouse brought a four-legged oaken foot-

stool and sat down in the firelight beside her father's chair to listen.

Then they told the grim story of that day, corroborating each other upon the minutest details. How there were thousands at Hang Fair. Yes, there were, more than had ever been known before; ay, groovers and civil folk so well. And Standerwick, he died game. Yes, he died like a man, he did. And young Giles Standerwick, the cudgel-player, walked alongside the cart, well, so close as ever the constables would allow, and talked to his father from the gallows' foot, and bade him good-bye, and stayed to the end; and then ran, like one mad, head-first amongst the crowd, and was seen no more.

'Draw up closer, maid,' said her father. 'Be cold? How you do trem'ley.'

But the girl only drew on one side out of the way.

'There was half Shipham at the Bull Inn, wild drunk,' whispered Solomon Moggridge. 'There, I hustled on so quick as I could. I was thankful to God, I hadna' a-hand hand in taking the man. For constable or no constable, what ud they care about that? If you had but meddled wi' a groover. Why, if they did catch ee out 'pon hill one o' these dark nights, they'd so soon drop ee down a old mine as look. An' never a soul on earth to hear when you did hollar, or be the wiser where you was gone.'

A murmur of assent wandered around the company. Joseph Pierce moved uneasily and looked grave. Then they puffed their pipes in silence; and, greatly encouraged, Solomon, wagging his head, went on.

'You see, what I do zay is this. 'Tis a ticklish place to live if you be a bit misliked. 'Tis better to let a thing pass. I should myself, I know.'

Solomon revelled in a red waistcoat, and, having spoken, he thrust his thumbs into the armholes and leaned back in his chair, the picture of easy-going contentment.

Little Joey Pierce glanced sharply up. 'Pretty talk that for a constable,' he sneered.

Supported by general sympathy on a solid foundation of common-sense, Solomon stood his ground.

'Well,' he said with slow deliberation, 'I do call 'twere a bold thing—a'most too bold for wisdom—o' Mr. Pierce to lay thik information. So there.'

One after another the company chimed in like a peal of bells.

'Twere.'

'Iss 'twere.'

'Zo 'twere.'

'I've a-zaid 't were, more 'an once.'

'What do Mr. John Winterhead think now? Let's hear that,' cried Jims Matravis, and at once each tongue was hushed.

John Winterhead solemnly scratched his chin with the stem of his pipe and reflected.

'Tis law,' he began gravely, with a wave of the long clay to force home his argument. 'An' what's law we know is right. But I could never bring my mind to think 't were duty to hang a man for one sheep—not for one. I'd sooner to count one double an' hold my tongue. But neighbour Pierce, you see, he's boun' to hollar when he's a bit hurt. He've a-got a maggot in the brain o' un that won't let un bide still. He's too hasty for calm judgment, to my mind. Come, come, Mr. Pierce, you don't drink.'

At these pleasantries the company laughed outright, and laughter at himself was a recreation in which little Joey Pierce could in no wise join. Stung by the taunt, he fidgeted a moment with his glass and spoon. Then, in spite of himself, his irritability burst forth in words.

'I can hold my tongue, an' bide so still as any man living—when I be a-minded,' he cried with growing warmth. 'But what I've a-got is my own, an' I've a-got a use for it. Some o' us ben't so well off as some. We didn' begin wi' money an' land a-left us; an' we han't a-done so well since. We can't afford to be afeard——'

'Afeard!'

That was a word to strike sparks out of John Winterhead.

'Don't you ever use the word afeard to me, Joseph Pierce,' he retorted hotly. 'Man an' boy I've a-lived here five-an'-forty year, an' coming or going, night or day, since I were high enough to look a man in the face, I've never turned back out o' fear o' what were in front; an' I never had a word stick in the throat o' me for want o' heart to spit un out. An' so I tell you, Joseph Pierce, I would *not* hang a man for a sheep—not for one. Not for forty thousand judges and juries, I wouldn' hang a man for one sheep. For murder now, there's the command o' God. An' for a ho'se—that's different. These here gipsy ho'se thieves up an' down the country, I should like to see 'em all strung up 'pon one gallis. But a groover do earn too much money to steal for a

trade, an' never one o' 'em owed grudge against John Winterhead; an' I don't mean he should. But that's calm judgment, Joseph Pierce—not afeard.'

Little Joey Pierce looked crestfallen, and all would have been well if Solomon Moggridge had but held his peace. Yet Solomon's words contained wisdom almost worthy of his name.

'Ay, 'tis better to lost a little,' he said, 'an what 'tis to breed ill-will.'

'Better for you, Solomon Moggridge. Better for you,' snarled Joseph Pierce.

The retort just now thought of, laboriously but late, came in handy after all.

'I thank God,' continued the constable with pious gratitude, 'if I ben't so quick as some, I ben't so covetchous.'

Little Joey Pierce sprang in a fury to his feet.

'I'll never sit in company to be called names, not if the man's so big as a house!' he cried, and glared on Solomon, as everybody afterwards agreed, as if he would swallow him.

'Pack o' nonsense,' laughed John Winterhead, stretching forward his great arm as a barrier. 'Sit down, I tell ee.'

'Unless that word's a-took back I'll go to once,' threatened the irascible little man.

'Sit down, I tell ee. In an hour or so the moon'll be up, an' you can ride on comfortable wi' the rest.'

'Let un take back that word!' cried Joey Pierce, more implacable than ever.

'Then you take back stunpole!' returned Solomon with a readiness which surprised himself for a long time afterwards.

Quickened by the loud and ignorant mirth of the three o' Blagdon, Joey Pierce tried to push his way towards the door.

'I won't bide! I won't bide!' he shouted at the top of his voice.

The lines on John Winterhead's shaven face grew stern. Then he put down his arm.

'Joseph Pierce,' he said, with more of dignity than anger, 'you comed into Charterhouse so welcome as the light; an' you mid go so free as the air. But if you do, you'll never come in again so long as you do live, 'ithout you do come unasked.'

But argument was of no avail. You might as well talk to the wall when the little man's dander was up. Scarcely were the words spoken, before Joey Pierce slammed the door behind him and was gone.



His departure was a relief. For what good is it to spoil a pleasant evening with so much foolery? 'Give and take,' to be sure. That's the way to go on comfortable like. And Solomon took stunpole like a lamb, so he did. They listened for the ambling of Joey Pierce's broken-kneed pony as he cantered down the road, and laughed anew. Only John Winterhead was vexed, for no man ever before in anger left his house.

'Tis enough to make good drink get up in the head o' ee, to talk to sich a feller,' muttered Solomon, proud of having outshone himself in argument; 'an' like pushing your head into a black thorn bush every word you do speak.'

'Tes.'

'Iss 'tes.'

'Zo 'tes.'

'I've a-said 'tes more 'an once.'

Then for awhile they fell to discussing with neighbourly liberality the many frailties of their late companion: how grasping he was for what he could get—how stingy over what he had already got—how quick to borrow and slow to lend; and never could abear one word in dispraise of himself. And yet withal so foolish that he must go to make bad blood; for it was easy enough to pay off a grudge on those lonely hills. Just a spark of a dark night, on the windy side of a stack, and in five minutes the flames would leap sky-high. Why, a man might be half ruined before he was half awake.

Then they forgot all that. The wind roared in the great open chimney; the little mouse put on more logs; and as they rubbed their knee-breeches and grey worsted hose against the heat, the spirit of gossip that haunts the hearth loosened their tongues, and they told old tales of the hills.

How Jims Matravis's girt-gran'-vather—well, his gran'-vather's wife's vather, look-y-see, had seen '*the burning of the hill*' with his own eyes. There was one o' Shipham who stole ore, an' they shut him up in his own wood hut, there on the slope over against Callow, and piled dry 'vuz' all round right up to roof an' all, till it looked more like one o' the humps 'pon Black-down than any man's house. And they set fire to it, three places to once, hap what may. But the thief tore ope the door 'pon inside, an' ran through for the life o' un, where the blaze rushed up like a furnace. He had a long brown beard, so 't was said, and by the time he was out, his chin was so smooth as the back of a spring chicken plucked and singed.



'An' that was the groovers' very own law,' explained Jims, 'that the King hizzelf had no power to gainsay.'

'N'eet the constable,' suggested Solomon with approval.

'Hark! What's that?' said the one o' Blagdon from his corner, holding up his hand for silence.

They turned their heads to listen.

'Tis folks a-singing their way home merry from Hang Fair,' whispered another.

'An' I hope to God they'll get there. I do, sure,' beamed the good-natured constable. 'For there's more 'an one 'ull lost his way an' lie under the stars to-night I'll go bail.'

'You lost yourself one time, didn' ee, Solomon?' asked John Winterhead with a wink.

'I did so,' replied Solomon.

'In your own home groun', didn' ee? Leastways zo 'tis said.'

'I did zo. For I trapsed roun' an' roun' for hours till I wur so mazed as a sheep. An' there I should a-bin now, I do lot, if our Tom hadn' a-comed out wi' a lantern an' voun' me,' chuckled Solomon. 'But 'tis a nasty thing to lost yourself,' he added, suddenly becoming mighty serious.

'Tes.'

'Iss 'tes.'

'Zo 'tes.'

'But I tell ee what 'tes,' said John Winterhead, leaning back and nodding his head dogmatically at every other word. 'There's nothing 'pon earth—so dark—at night—as a fine rain. In a thick drizzle, mind me, you can't keep a coach-road, let alone a track across the common. An' you can't trust a ho'se then, not even when he's old an' waywise. Why, we've a-bin in a hole together, ho'se an' man, five foot deep, an' stayed there too, wet to the skin, till daylight. An' should again. For, look-y-zee, there's only one way right an' all else roun' is wrong. An' if you can't zee, bide still, I tell ee, till light do come. For, hap what may, day is boun' to break. An' one step more, for all you do know, you mid be down, not five foot, but five fathom.'

'Or ten.'

'Ay. Or more 'an ten.'

'But this is poor talk I do call it,' put in Solomon. 'Why, the little maid ha'n't a-spoke a word to-night. Come, wake up, Missie. Ope your eyes an' look up.'

The girl, still on her footstool, was awake. Her great eyes,

open wide, stared into the fire; but her thoughts were far away upon the common, in the dark, the cold, and the rain.

'Come, strike up! I'll sing the "Blue Muselin" wi' ee myself, or you'll lost the use o' your tongue else.'

And before she could refuse Solomon, looking up through the chimney at the stars, in a little tin, cracked, falsetto voice, began that time-honoured song:

'Oh! Will you accept of the muselin so blue  
To wear all in the morning and to dabble in the dew?'

And willy-nilly Patty was forced to reply:

'No, I will not accept of the muselin so blue  
To wear all in the morning and to dabble in the dew.'

Then Solomon, growing dramatic, held out his great freckled hand towards the maid, and as he gained courage his voice cracked the more:

'Oh! Will you accept of the pretty silver pin  
To pin your golden hair wi' the fine muselin?'

And Patty replied, just like a response in church:

'No, I will not accept of the pretty silver pin  
To pin my golden hair with the fine muselin.'

A gust of smoke came driving down into the kitchen. John Winterhead got up and went on tiptoe, ever so little to open a window. But Solomon, now well started, in spite of coughing, continued to sing with great feeling,

'Oh! Will you accept of a pair of shoes of cork——'

'Stop! There's somebeddy a-hollaring,' suddenly cried John Winterhead.

The song ceased. Every mouth was opened wide to listen. Sure enough an impatient rattling of the garden gate could be distinctly heard, and presently came a cry shrill and clear:

'Mr. Winterhead! Mr. Winterhead!'

The cold night air rushed in as he drew back the heavy oak door. The little mouse followed him, and stood shivering in the porch.

'Dash my wig! 'Tis Sophia!' he muttered in alarm.

And almost before the company had found time to shuffle to their feet, Sophia came running breathless into the house.

'Full half an hour have I been fiddling wi' that fool of a latch; an' ran every foot o' the way from Ubley, too,' she cried in anger at the delay. Glancing from one to another, her quick eye took in every detail, and her tone of complaint suddenly changed to dismay.

'Where's vather? Where's my vather?'

In consternation at her father's absence, she turned abruptly towards John Winterhead, and the demand contained both accusation and reproach.

'But isn't he home, Sophia?'

'I never thought but what he was here,' she went on in breathless anxiety. 'The wold pony have a-comed in wi'out a soul 'pon his back; the rein all a-brokt an' a-dragging half a mile under the hoofs o' un. I never thought but what he'd a-brokt loose——'

'An' didn't you meet your vather 'pon the road, Sophia?' interrupted Solomon, his broad, good-natured face covered with dismay.

'If I had, should I want to ask you?' she answered contemptuously. 'No. I know what 'tis. He had a glass too much, an' you teased un so mad as a bull. An' he up an' went. An' you let un go. An' then he mus' needs take some short cut, like a fool, an' fall off. An' who'll have to pomster un up wi' his rheumatics, an' put up wi' his ways, I should like to know, when he've a-got scrambled a-most to death, lying out in the vrost?'

'Zit down, zit down a minute, Sophia,' said John Winterhead kindly, laying a hand upon her shoulder. 'You were too quick. Ten to one your vather had a-comed home all right if you had but waited a bit. Zit down an' warm yourself while we do get ready. We'll ride on all together. If he ha'n't a-got home to Ubley, we'll find un quick enough, no fear.'

But these well-meant assurances did not belie the doubt which lay at the bottom of his heart. To the quick ear of Patty, attentive to the slightest turn of her father's voice, his anxiety was manifest. Sophia sat down. In a moment John Winterhead was prompt and masterful, as always when something must be done.

'Look alive, all o' ee—quick 's you can! Sprack, little mouse. Light the lantern an' run out to stable, an' find a physic bottle for a drop of brandy, if you can.'

The company wisely drained their glasses, for to waste good liquor is sin, and bustled out.

Little Patty Winterhead, kneeling down upon the hearth with her lantern, drew a burning stick from the fire to get a light. But all the while she was wondering how Sophia was to ride.

'An' get out the pillion, Patty, there's a good maid,' her father shouted back from the porch.

The pillion! Sophia to ride with him on the pillion!

Unused since her mother's death, it was hanging half forgotten in a cupboard of the inner room. It went to her heart to get it out—and for Sophia of all people. For though in a sort of way they were friends, there was no tenderness between them. And Sophia looked harder than ever, leaning forward from the corner seat, with her palms stretched out to catch more heat from the burning sticks.

A spirit of revolt arose within the girl. Her hand shook so much that the candle would not light.

'Here, gie it here,' said Sophia, snatching it away in her abrupt, short manner. She held the wick quite still in a dancing little blue flame.

Already was heard the clatter of horses as they came into the road, and somebody shouted to Patty to be quick.

There was no help for it. She ran in the dark, and fumbled with the pillion as she reached it down from the peg. Sophia, indeed! A sentiment was outraged, and she cried as if she had been hurt. But there was no time to lose. Before she got back into the kitchen Sophia had gone.

Little Patty Winterhead ran out with it into the road. When all was ready she held the lantern by the uppingstock beside the gate for Sophia to mount.

'Hold tight!' shouted John Winterhead to Sophia, as the neighbours rode straggling away, very much as they had come.

Left alone, the little mouse set her teeth and stamped her foot.

It made her mad with jealousy to see Sophia's arm around her father's waist.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE LAST LIFE ON UBLEY.

THE April showers were not all gone. Now and again a pattering raindrop threatened storm, as black masses of hurrying cloud went chasing each other across the sky. But the north wind

drove them on too fast to fall. Great solitary stars shone out undimmed in the gaps between the darkness; and then for awhile the wide expanse of heaven was swept clear. The distant ridge of the down, the winding of the road, even the long grey walls—undulating for miles across the open common—became discernible under the soft whiteness of the Milky Way; and like a halo upon the brow of Cheddar Hill grew the pale light of the rising moon.

'Tis none so dark,' called John Winterhead to those behind. 'Mr. Pierce 'll have found his way home all right afore we do get there.'

At the entrance to Ubley, a low thatched homestead half hidden amongst sheltering beech trees, he drew up and peered into the gloom.

'Ride on,' urged Sophia in his ear. 'I trigged the gate wide ope myself, for father to ride straight in if he should be late. But he ha'n't a-comed. He'd be out at the sound o' us if he had a-comed.'

She jumped to her feet, even before the mare was still, stumbled upon the rough ground of the farmyard, and ran into the house.

The neighbours drew closer together and talked in loud whispers. Dark, shapeless figures, against the black background of hedge and trees, they could with difficulty distinguish each other.

'Who's that, Solomon?' 'No, Jims.' 'He can't ha' comed home, never in this world.' 'Not that. When Joey Pierce is about he's boun' to show hisself.' 'Ay. If he's mad wi' us still, he must run out to hollar; an' if he've a-got good tempered, he must pop the head o' un out o' winder to call us all the fools 'pon earth for the trouble we've a-tookt.' 'If he've a-brokt a lag or anything, I suppose Sophia could manage.' 'Manage? She'd manage all Mendip.'

The laughter which greeted this tribute to the greatness of Sophia was promptly stifled as she came running back into the barton.

'He's not there,' she cried, frantic with apprehension of mishap. 'There's never been so much as a sound, the maid says. Ah? he've a-met wi' harm. He'd a-heard us else, as we comed by. It's two hours agone the ho'se runned in—an' more too. A pretty upsetting, sure enough, if he's to be laid on the back o' un, God only knows how long. An' the man a-coming first thing in morning about buying o' the pigs.'

Even in distress, no sentimental weakness marred Sophia's excellent common-sense. No tears dimmed her insight into the inconvenience of an accident to her father. Nor could she easily overcome a natural impatience with one of his years who had been fool enough to get lost.

'Well, he've a-got to be foun', I suppose,' she added, in her short discontented way. 'What can us do, Mr. Winterhead?'

'Ay, to be sure. What had us better to do, Mr. Winterhead?' echoed Solomon.

In any party whatsoever of the yeomen of that neighbourhood, John Winterhead was the acknowledged leader. This position was his by Nature, and Fortune had confirmed the gift. Without hesitation he took the whole matter into his hands.

'Neighbours,' he began sententiously, 'Joseph Pierce is a man wi' more headpiece an' heart.'

'He is,' agreed Solomon.

'An' he'd play so many pranks as a fox to take care o' the skin o' un.'

'He 'ood.'

'If he heard folk upon the road, sooner 'an fall in wi' a drunken groover on a night like this he'd turn off the track—ay, an' lie so quiet as a mouse when we went by, not knowing who we mid be.'

He paused for a more general assent.

'An' wait for the moon to be up to make his way home,' suggested long Jims Matravis, and the rest chimed in again.

'Iss, he 'ood.'

'Zo he 'ood.'

'But for all that we mus' waste no time. Part up all o' ee, two an' two together. One lot ride athirt the down—an' one up by the cross roads—an' tothermy along the common. An' stop now an' again, look-y-zee, to call the man by name. Then if he's hurt, he'll know who 'tis an' answer.'

'But what'll you do yourzelf, Mr. Winterhead?' It was Sophia who asked. She was quicker witted than the men.

'I'll ride across to the mineries, myself, so quiet as I can. If there's anybeddy a-moving, mayhap I mid find out who 'tis.' His voice sank into a whisper, and the neighbours said not a word; they knew full well the thought that was working in his mind.

By this time one half the moon had risen above the hill. It cast a pale light upon the field beyond the trees. Without many

words the company paired up as they would, Solomon and Jims, two o' Blagdon together, and the other with the one o' Cheddar. Sophia followed out of the shadow of the homestead and watched them depart. John Winterhead, mounted upon his high mare, turned away alone, a tall black figure against the sky.

A few yards away he stopped.

'Sophia,' he called back to the girl, and she ran at once and stood beside his stirrup.

'Get a drop of brandy,' he told her. 'The little mouse forgot it, but her mind's too quick for thought. There, it mid come in handy. 'Tis cold to lie upon the grass by night. Look, you can zee the groun' all white wi' frost.'

In a minute she was gone and back.

'What a sprack nimble maid you be, Sophia!' he cried in admiration. And when she handed up the bottle he leaned forward and patted her underneath the chin. 'Why, what have all the young chaps bin a-thinking about to lef ee alone?' he laughed.

He slowly crossed the field and passed through a gate into a tract of wild, uncultivated land. The young stock that wandered over it at will had worn for themselves beaten paths across the heather and between the clumps of gorse. Along one of these the mare picked her way, sometimes striking her hoof against hard masses of projecting rock. Here and there a boulder of mountain limestone, jutting from the hillside, shone in the light. A herd of some half-dozen white heifers was huddled together in the shelter of a ruined kiln, and the mare pricked forward her ears. 'Steady, mare,' he said to her in a low voice. And she kept on at his word, for well enough they knew the place and were at home together.

At last they stood upon the brow of a promontory overlooking a hollow. The great full moon, now free of the hill, hung in the sky and killed the stars with light; but the valley below was dark as pitch. A whitewashed cottage, standing above a row of round buddling-ponds in which ore was washed, cast a faint ghostly glare upon the black stagnant water. Upon the deep shadow the wooden huts of the minery stood out like blots.

John Winterhead watched and listened.

No one moved. From no chimney darted up a single spark, and not so much as a rushlight gleamed from any window in the place.

Far away upon the hills behind, at intervals, he heard a shout—now from one part, then another. This was the only



sound that broke the silence of the night. Without knowing them, from the lusty throat of Solomon Moggridge he could have caught the words,

'Mr. Joseph Pierce! Joseph Pierce!'

'They don't drop in wi' un,' he muttered to himself.

He did not call. He was not afraid. It was no idle fireside boast that he had never turned back nor held his tongue through fear; but he felt it prudent to look well around before arousing that dusky valley with his voice. The night was now very bright and clear. Upon a white-beam bush, springing from a crevice in the rock below, he could see the swollen buds bursting into green leaf against the sombre purple of the rind. Upon his right, for a quarter of a mile, the crown of the hill was covered thick with pits and holes, close together, like the cells of a honeycomb. More than a thousand years ago, men said, the hands that delved them had gone to dust. But none knew when they were made or when abandoned; and in the lonely moonlight this was the most desolate, forsaken place on earth.

He raised himself in the saddle and narrowly scanned the ground around.

It was conceivable that the missing man might have chosen to go home this way, yet none but a fool would take such broken path, upon a stumbling pony without a leg to stand upon.

A dread, amounting to a certainty of evil, came over him.

He turned his mare, and, skirting the old diggings, peered in vain into these mysterious pits, one after another, as he passed. Then he called, not loudly, and only once:

'Joseph Pierce!'

No answer came. Afar off, Solomon Moggridge and the rest, more anxious as time went by, were hooting to each other like owls. This angered him. What good was that? Did they want to call up the whole country? If the man was near to hear, he could hear, couldn't he? They were getting round towards Charterhouse too. It would be as well to get back at once and decide what ought to be done.

Beyond the abandoned mines, across the common, lay an unfenced drove. He took it and cantered towards home.

His mind was as free to think on horseback as in his armchair beside the hearth, and thoughts came crowding pell-mell into his brain. Joseph Pierce would never be found. Lord! A couple o' groovers—and it might have been half a dozen that went singing by—mad wi' drink an' riotous from Hang Fair would carry

the man a mile in mere frolic to drop him deep into the earth, where he might lie out of sight, unheard of and unburied, to the last trump.

He turned into the straight road between the two walls leading to his house.

It would be a slur upon Charterhouse if anything had happened, and *he* leaving like that. Yet what could be done with one so hot and 'voreright' as Joey Pierce? And Joseph Pierce was the last life on Ubley.

Love of the land was second nature in John Winterhead's yeoman blood, and now the thought of it came uppermost, pushing all else aside, like the thought of a thing beloved.

Joseph Pierce the last life on Ubley! If anything amiss had befallen, Ubley Farm must fall into hand. Mercy 'pon us! Why, left alone, the man was sound and good for ten—fifteen—ay, a score o' years, wi' luck, an' Sophia to manage, if—

'Steady, mare. Steady.'

The mare had swerved. With the irritability of one disturbed in mind, he spoke impatiently and kicked her with his heel.

But she would not go on. She tried to turn. Then, as he held her straight, with legs and neck outstretched, she trembled and backed, and snorted as if to drive an evil smell out of her nostrils.

On the rough wayside grass, close by the gap where the stones had fallen off the wall, his eye caught sight of the thing that frightened her. It might be a groover lying there dead drunk. But John Winterhead knew better. His heart leapt into his mouth. Something told him, sure enough, that the shapeless heap was little Joey Pierce, and that the mare sniffed blood.

He twisted the mane around his finger and sprang from the saddle.

Even in his excitement, with prudence characteristic of the Winterheads, he led the mare on a few yards, slipped off the bridle lest she should catch herself up, and let her go head-free. It was little better than a furlong to the house; her stable door was open. She would find her way home, safe enough—trust her for that.

He knelt down and gently turned over the injured man to look upon his face. The earth was moist. Hoar-frost lay like silver upon the grass, but a deep stain of red remained across his knuckles where his hand touched the ground. John Winterhead was of good nerve, yet he shivered at the sight.

Yes. It was little Joey Pierce who sat just now by the fireside and quarrelled with his friends.

His cheeks were cold and white as ashes. Not a sign of breathing came through his parted lips. Upon one side the grizzled hair was black and stiff with blood, but the great cut upon his head had ceased to bleed.

Seized with sudden fury, John Winterhead cursed all the groovers upon earth between his clenched teeth. Then a softness of pity crept into his heart so that he could well-nigh cry. Joseph Pierce! whom he had known from the first—who was up a hardish lad when he was a child. He gently lifted the poor limp body to a more level place nearer the road. As he laid it down it quivered in his hands. It heaved a sigh.

Quick as thought John Winterhead drew the bottle from his pocket. The brandy was what was wanted to save Joseph Pierce from death. Little by little he poured the spirit between his lips and was glad to hear it gurgle in his throat. All the while he kept speaking to him, recalling him to sense, as he would have aroused him from sleep.

Warmed into life, Joseph Pierce opened his eyes and stared half-dazed into the face bent over him.

For one moment his mind came back.

'Giles Standerwick,' he gasped, with something of his old eagerness. 'It was—young Giles Stan——.'

With the effort of speaking the bleeding burst out afresh; and before the sentence could be completed he fainted again. A slight tremor passed over him from head to foot, like when old people tell you someone is treading upon your grave. Once he sighed, his jaw dropped, and Joseph Pierce was dead.

Away up the road Solomon Moggridge, Jims Matravis, the one o' Cheddar and three o' Blagdon had met at last. Emboldened by numbers they kept calling together.

'Joseph Pierce! Mr. Joseph Pierce!'

The irony, the futility of it begot in John Winterhead a passing contempt.

Ay, they might call in vain for Joseph Pierce.

It flashed across his mind that it might be prudent to say nothing to these open-mouthed fellows of what he knew. Sure as the light one or another would blab, and the murderer make good his escape before the law could touch him. He would not tell to-night that the dying man had spoken at all, but whisper a word in the ear of Constable Moggridge to-morrow—when

nobody was about—in time to give evidence at the crowner's quest. That was the wisest way without doubt.

And now the others were in sight. He got up and slowly walked to meet them. He had no heart to call aloud and tell them what had happened.

Opposite the body they all dismounted. They stood around silent and overawed, as simple souls must always be in the presence of death.

'It must ha' bin the groovers that went by a-hollaring,' whispered one.

'To be sure. 'Twere soon after he went,' agreed another.

'Unhang the nearest gate, two o' ee, an' we'll carr' un into Charterhouse,' said John Winterhead in a hoarse voice.

'Why, 'tis the last life 'pon Ubley,' whispered Solomon to Jims as they passed under the porch.

*(To be continued.)*

## *The Preservation of Hearing.*

IT is on all sides admitted that the laws of health should be in the possession of everyone, not only for the sake of individuals, but equally so for the benefit of the children who may be under their care.

General information on this important subject has been much increased and diffused of late years, to the inestimable advantage of the present generation, and so far as diet, exercise, and surroundings at home and at school are concerned, everything that ought to be known has been thoroughly made a matter of common knowledge.

More than this has been done. For in the direction of especial attention being paid to the eyesight of children, the Board schools have been placed on the alert, so that, in case of children being found on examination to have defective sight, they have been saved the risk of increasing any eye trouble by the timely insistence upon the use of glasses.

So far, however, as concerns the ears and hearing, nothing of similar utility has been effected, and the only consideration that is paid to children with defective hearing has hitherto taken the form of correction (given, of course, without the knowledge of the defect) for want of attention (so-called) on the part of the child. It has seemed to me, for many years past, that it would be greatly to the advantage of the community at large, and especially to that of the children, if a few simple, easily understood facts on this matter were made known.

Every man and woman should be aware of what (to use a common expression) is bad for the ear, so that they can avoid placing themselves under such conditions, for example, as might damage the hearing, cause permanent noises in the ear, injure the structure of the ear, produce inflammation in the ear, or induce the advent of any disease of this part. In short, it is the duty of all who put a true estimate on the value of their ears to inform

themselves sufficiently to be able to preserve, rather than run the risk of damaging, either their own or those of their children.

In giving such information as may embrace this, and not go beyond it, I wish especially to avoid dealing in any way with what appertains to disease or injuries of the ear, except so far as guarding against them is concerned. So, in order to understand the following remarks, the briefest outline and the most rudimentary idea of the formation and structure of the ear will be sufficient.

It will be enough to know that the entrance to the ear is the beginning of a somewhat curved canal (the external canal of the ear) of one and a quarter inches in length, and somewhat narrowed about the middle. That at the other end of this canal is a delicate membrane (the tympanic membrane) which protects and closes the tympanic cavity (the drum of the ear); that this small cavity is kept ventilated by air from a narrow tube (the Eustachian tube), the open end of which is placed in the throat in close proximity to the back of the nostrils. Also that in apposition to the drum of the ear is the nervous apparatus of hearing (the labyrinth). It may be added that the drum of the ear is crossed by a chain of three little bones.

Anyone armed with nothing beyond the very simple information which these few words convey would not allow a child to have its ears boxed, for he would have before his mind the possibility of injuring the delicate membrane referred to, or the nervous structure behind it, and at no great distance from the external ear. If this be so, the desirability of greater knowledge than now obtains on this subject is at once demonstrated. I must, in connection with the dangerous and brutal practice of correcting children in this way, observe that it is immensely less frequent than it used to be, though as recently as five years ago an instance came under my notice, when, at a public school of considerable standing, the membrane of the tympanum was ruptured in this manner: violent inflammation of the ear ensued, and the boy was in consequence in considerable danger of his life. A few years previously a boy died of inflammation of the brain induced by the same cause. It must also be remembered that the hearing is very often irreparably damaged from shock to the nervous structure which is caused by the sudden compression of air within the external canal, even when the membrane escapes without a rupture. In short, a violent box on the ear is about as senseless and cruel a proceeding as a violent blow on the eye. The fact

that the eye is in the sight of all, and that the ear is hidden from view, is surely no reason why the latter should be ruthlessly damaged any more than the former.

I repeat that the boxing of ears is less frequent in schools than it used to be, but the time is not far distant, I hope, when it will be only a memory of a less enlightened age, for at all times it has chiefly been the outcome of thoughtlessness and ignorance. An unexpected blow on the ear, just as in the case of an unexpected explosion near the ear, is far more damaging than when it is expected. There exists an arrangement within the cavity of the tympanum which acts as a protection to the nervous structure when the explosion or blow is seen to be coming: it consists in an involuntary contraction of a muscle which moves the position of the membrane, so as to take off, in some degree, the effect of the jar. It is a similar movement to what takes place when the eyelid closes to prevent the entrance of an object into the eye.

It will be seen, then, that there is considerable danger in even a very slight blow, such as might be and is sometimes given when a child creeps up behind anyone, and in play gives them a pat on the ear. This will, occasionally, damage the hearing permanently, and induce a troublesome singing noise in the ear. The same may also follow any very loud sound, close to the ear, given in an unexpected manner. A familiar instance of this accident I have on several occasions known to happen from the whistle of an engine, the person whose hearing was damaged standing close up to, but with his back towards the engine.

It will readily, then, be understood how frequently this sort of accident may take place, and when the fact is once appreciated it may be very generally guarded against. The explosions of any sort of firearms—guns, rifles, heavy naval guns, and artillery guns—are responsible in countless instances for deafness produced by shock to the nervous structures of the ears; and though the duties of soldiers and sailors do not in the majority of cases admit of the avoidance of deafness from this cause, they do in a good many, as I shall presently show.

It may be briefly said that most naval men and artillery men have their hearing damaged at one time or another from guns, and indeed it is only what might be expected from the terrific explosions to which they are exposed on duty; but, besides this, it is not an infrequent experience that a great degree of deafness is traceable rather to some single explosion near to which the man has been standing than to the frequent discharges of guns.



The old brass guns that used to be employed on training ships were responsible for many a damaged ear of the young men, and seem to have had a peculiarly injurious effect, altogether disproportionate to the size of the gun. In the army the musketry instructor is exposed to great risk in this direction, and it is difficult to guard against it. In short, with our soldiers and sailors a certain loss of hearing seems almost inevitable. So far as game shooting is concerned, everyone who shoots a great deal knows perfectly well that the hearing of the left ear after a few years is never so good as that of the right, and when black powder was used instead of the various chemical powders, wood powder, E.C., and many others, this effect was very much more pronounced. In the Eastern counties, where the shooting is on a large scale, and four or five hundred shots are constantly fired by one man in one day, the deafness of the left ear so produced used to go by the name of Norfolk deafness. In the old days also of Hurlingham, when the charge was not restricted, as it now is, I hardly knew a man who shot there (and I knew many of them) that could hear well with the left ear. Even now, notwithstanding that chemical powders are almost invariably used, of six middle-aged men who are partridge-driving, if they are old hands at it, you might safely say that not one of them has good hearing with the left ear. I, for one, certainly think it is a small penalty to pay for the years of pleasure which they obtain from the sport, but in dealing with this subject plainly the fact must be mentioned.

There is another and about as stupid a way as can well be in which ears are damaged heedlessly, and it is when two men are walking close together on a return from a beat, and one of the two, regardless of the proximity of his neighbour, kills or fires at a bird or rabbit in front of them. In this case the explosion is unexpected, damaging to the ear, reprehensible, and cockneyfied.

Only once have I seen the membrane to be ruptured from this procedure, and then it healed in a few days, leaving very little deafness. It would almost seem that the force was partially expended in the very breaking of the membrane, and so in some degree diminished the shock that would otherwise have resulted. To return, however, to the case of the big guns. When the membrane has been ruptured by the terrific force of the explosions, the damage to the hearing has not been so great as when it has remained intact, showing a similarity in this respect to the instance above quoted.

What a single explosion will on certain occasions do, often.

repeated noises will effect, as in the case of boiler-makers, who notoriously become deaf. Indeed, neither in the case of big guns nor boiler-making is it to be wondered at that deafness should be produced. The structure of the ear was not originally planned with a view of its being subjected to such violent treatment, so the penalties of human progress include deafness from the causes above named. It comes to this, then—that the precise nature of the causes, no less than the precise nature of the injury, must be placed clearly before the minds of persons in order that their ingenuity may suggest the best methods of diminishing the risks.

In the case of naval and military officers whose duty lies close to big guns, if they take any precaution, it is usually confined to putting a little cotton in the ears. This in a very slight degree takes off some of the shock. Anything which would prevent hearing the word of command would of course not be permissible. A plan which affords far more protection than cotton, and which does not interfere with hearing the orders, consists in using a species of plug which, with a little pressure, can be made to close the ears. This plug is made of the very soft clay used by artists for modelling, and is kneaded with cotton. It then forms a substance which can be moulded in a few moments by the person using it to fit any ear, whilst the addition of the cotton-fibre prevents the clay from sticking in the canal of the ear. I find that this is an excellent protection, and meets all requirements better than any method I have known.

It is most necessary that a few words be said to mothers, or those who have the charge of children, on the question as to what to do in case a child puts anything into its ear. It should be clearly understood, in the first place, that they cannot put anything very far into the ear; neither can what they do put in be in any way of the slightest harm so long as it is left alone. If the very simple description given of the external canal of the ear be remembered, this will be at once obvious; and it will be equally clear how serious would be the damage if any attempts were made to remove an object by unskilled hands, whose efforts would assuredly push it more deeply into the ear and injure the delicate membrane at the far end. Children will often put beads, stones, peas, or any small object into their ears for the pure fun of the thing. Provided no attempt has been made to remove the object, a surgeon accustomed to work with reflected light, which perfectly illumines the canal of the ear, can with the greatest

ease remove anything which the child has placed there. But what is generally done? The mother is alarmed, tries to get it out, and in so doing invariably pushes it farther in (thus making the extraction, which was a simple matter, a very difficult one), or the ear is syringed—the stream of water only driving it further inwards.

So let it be never forgotten that the interests of the child are best served, the ear is best preserved, by a masterly inactivity until efficient help is obtainable, and that some delay is not attended with any risk. It is to the fact of this rule not being followed that so much injury is caused from injudicious efforts at extraction by the hands of the unskilled. The membrane is in this way often ruptured, inflammation is set up, and the hearing is permanently either damaged or destroyed.

It will hardly be believed how frequently children are brought to hospitals to have objects removed from the ears, when in fact there is no object at all. The simple statement of the child is relied upon that he has put something in his ear, and before he is examined it has probably dropped out; this, however, in no way prevents all sorts of attempts to extract it being employed, with the disastrous effects here mentioned. How free from risk is a foreign body in the ear may be judged from the fact that they are frequently removed from the ear many years after they have been placed there. This occurs generally when the patient has submitted the ear to examination for some other reason. Personally, I have known all sorts of small objects to lie harmlessly in the ear for periods exceeding over ten or fifteen years.

The same principles apply in the case of insects creeping into the ear. Their presence is, of course, very alarming and disagreeable; but, none the less, no attempts should be made to extract them by instruments, seeing that they will either creep out or die if a few drops of oil be put in the ear. This simple measure will amply suffice until surgical help can be procured.

The advantages and disadvantages of sea-bathing for children often exercise the minds of mothers. I am one of those who think that indiscriminate sea-bathing for children is not an unalloyed benefit, and certainly, so far as relates to the ears, it is at times productive of great evil, and in the following manner:

It is well known that after scarlet fever, measles, or any of the eruptive fevers, the ears not infrequently become affected, and sometimes, although they have apparently got well, a perforation of the membrane may remain. This, if in a quiescent state, does

not attract attention. In such instances the entrance of sea water, which passes through the perforation, is pretty certain to excite acute inflammation and give rise to endless trouble. Not only will the hearing be much damaged, but inflammation in this region is not always free from danger to life. In the case, then, of all children who have had at any time a discharge from the ear, it is not safe to allow them to go into the sea until the ears have been examined and the membrane found to be intact.

That the very frequent presence of sea water in the canal of the ears is more or less irritating is shown by the fact that men who are great divers are very subject to enlargement of the bony part of the canal, and to tumours formed of very hard bony tissue, which block up partially the passage, and sometimes so entirely as to make necessary a surgical operation. When this is the case the person so suffering should never bathe without using a water-tight plug fitting the ear and made of vulcanite, for if the sea-water gets behind the bony enlargement (which it is pretty certain to do) it may start inflammation, which in such a confined space is serious.

I can readily understand some of those who have done me the favour to read so far will perhaps say that the advice I have offered for the protection of the ears may be all very well, but that for the ordinary man or woman who has passed middle age what is really wanted is information as to the best means of preserving the hearing, which they are dimly conscious is not in some respects so acute as it was some years ago. To such I would say that one and all must be prepared to lose in various degrees the hearing as life advances towards old age, and it will be to the advantage of such that they should in the first place apprehend the reasons why the processes of degeneration, which are natural to old age, should diminish hearing, and in the second place what mode of life tends on the one hand to delay, and on the other to hasten, those processes.

To begin with, after the age of about forty-five the elasticity of the arteries of the body becomes less; the arteries, which convey the blood from the heart to form nourishment to the tissues, become more stiff, unyielding, and brittle; so that by the time they have reached those parts which they should nourish they do not, in consequence of their thickening, supply sufficient nutriment.

The nervous centres therefore suffer from malnutrition. Whatever, then, are the influences which promote degeneration will

also tend to produce loss of the special senses; of these the hearing more than in the case of any other. It will be admitted generally that of all the causes which hasten degeneration, the drinking of anything more than a very small amount of alcohol after middle life is the greatest. Next, perhaps, comes anything more than a moderate diet. Amongst other causes may be counted an insufficient amount of fresh air or sleep.

Now, beyond the influences above named, there is nothing perhaps which ages men so much as worry and anxiety, or women so much as strong emotion of a painful character; in other words, mental shock. From these nothing can guard humanity; but in regard to diet, air, and sleep, much can be done. I have known men who drank freely, ate freely, and were rapidly degenerating and becoming deaf, by changing their mode of life, to arrest these processes and retain fair hearing for many years, which would otherwise have been spent under far less favourable conditions as regards hearing. Similar happy results will often occur in the case of men who live at too high pressure, and undergo too much excitement, when they take a prolonged rest. With such men the term rest includes an abundance of sleep, and in all affections of a nervous nature this is absolutely essential. Mention should perhaps be made of one influence which in a measure may be modified. It is the over-strain from prolonged and incessant nursing of a relative near and dear to them, which good women so freely bestow; for in the course of this, not only do they frequently suffer in their hearing, but, if it should be in any way affected, they strain their ears very much, being naturally anxious not to miss anything spoken by the invalid. This is very harmful to the hearing. It is not generally recognised how damaging anything like strain is to the ears, and with some persons, whose hearing is only slightly affected, the deafness is indefinitely increased by attending sermons and lectures of which they can only hear a part, and during the delivery of which the ears are kept over-strained. The exhaustion and increased deafness which follow fail to warn them how much damage they are doing to an already affected organ, although they are willing enough to recognise how damaging over-strain is to the eyes when they read small print with difficulty, or do very fine needlework by a bad light. Many persons are under the impression that the use of aids to hearing is likely to injure the ears. The facts are entirely the reverse of this, for anything which helps the hearing avoids the strain.

From what has already been said, it would seem to be almost unnecessary to add a note of warning against the custom of pouring any fluid into the ears (which will pass on to the sensitive membrane) for the purpose of relieving pain, or against syringing the ears, unless an inspection has demonstrated the presence of anything to be removed (for a violent stream of water on to the membrane must be a shock), and yet a few drops of laudanum for the ear of a child who has ear-ache, or a syringing for a man who becomes deaf, commonly enough form the commencement of treatment which makes the work of the surgeon more difficult than it would have been had the ears not been interfered with.

By negative management on the one hand, and by positive on the other on the lines above indicated, it will be seen that a good deal can be done towards the preservation of hearing, quite irrespective of medical or surgical aid.

WILLIAM B. DALBY.

## *The Birds' Evensong.*

(FAITHFULLY REPORTED INTO ENGLISH.)

*The Leader.* Sing it out! Sing it out! Sing it out!

*An Elder.* Quite right, quite right, quite right.

*A Sceptic.* Ah! no doubt!

*The Choir.* All thanks let us render  
In all love to the Sender,  
To the Sender of Night, to the Sender of Day!

*Sc.* Who says nay?

*The L.* Sing it out! Sing it out! Sing it out!

*Ch.* Sing in praise to the Maker of days!

*Sc.* Ah! No doubt!

*Ch.* And to Him who made the night!

*Eld.* Quite right, quite right, quite right.

*A Voice.* How I wonder what lies under——

*Sc.* All this rattle, all this clatter,  
But it really doesn't matter.  
*The L.* Never heed him. We don't need him,  
He's a child of darkest night.

*Eld.* Quite right, quite right, quite right.

*The L.* Sing it out! Sing it out! Sing it out  
Sing with all your little voices,  
For each one of us rejoices,  
Take it up with a will!

*Ch.* Ah! yes, who could be still?  
Who that had a voice to sing  
To the glory of the King?  
Who that knows the wondrous way  
Of the evening, of the day?

*Sc.* Who says nay?

*The L.* Never heed what he may say!  
While 'tis neither night nor day,  
Let us sing it once again,  
Let us sing the loving strain,



*THE BIRDS' EVENSONG.*

For when Night has dropped her screen,  
Then the nightingale is Queen !

*Ch.* Then the nightingale is Queen !  
In sad solitary glory  
She recounts her passionate story,  
Then the nightingale is Queen !  
But 'tis our love and duty  
To sing out the evening's beauty  
Till the ending of the day——

*Sc.* Who says nay ?

*Ch.* Till the ending of the day,  
Till the very death of day !

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

## *Reminiscences of a Few Days spent at a Country House with Mr. Gladstone.*

I HAD known Mr. Gladstone slightly ever since I was quite a girl, but it was only in 1880 that I for the first time stayed in the same house with him and had the pleasure of enjoying his conversation. It was after his serious illness; but no traces of it seemed left, and he walked with all the elasticity of youth and talked with all its enthusiasm, united with the memories of old times, which make the conversation of elderly men so interesting. And it has occurred to me that some jottings of his conversation which I made at the time may with advantage be recorded, as giving some, although only a faint, idea of the powers and versatility of intellect which made even his political opponents enjoy meeting him in society.

The party, which was a small one, met at Holmbury, the residence of my uncle, Mr. Leveson-Gower, who was always one of Mr. Gladstone's steadiest supporters in the House of Commons and also a great personal friend. Mr. Gladstone was fond of the place, its splendid views and its lovely scenery, and a frequent visitor. One of the guests was Mr. Edward Cheney, then advanced in years, who described himself as an 'Old Whig,' with opinions much opposed to Mr. Gladstone's, but who had lived much in society and had literary and intellectual tastes that were congenial to him. The other guest was General Claremont, who, as military *attaché*, was with the French army in the Crimea, and afterwards accompanied Louis Napoleon in his Italian campaign, and remained in Paris until the termination of the German war. He had in his official capacity seen much of the Imperial Court, about which he could give interesting details.

Our first day at Holmbury was a Sunday, and Mr. Gladstone went twice to a pretty new church, lately built by the late Mr. Street, who resided in the neighbourhood, as a memorial to his wife, and endowed by the congregation. In the morning

Mr. Gladstone drove there, but walked to the six-o'clock service with my husband and myself. Our way lay over the hill, and he was delighted with the beauty of the scenery, and especially with the descent through the wood, where the pretty little church of Holmbury St. Mary first appears from among the fir-trees. The sittings are all free, and he took his seat in one of them, and joined in the service with great reverence and devotion of manner. After church Mr. Street joined us, and walked with us as far as his own house, where he wished us good-bye. While he accompanied us, we had some talk about free sittings, a great hobby of his. Mr. Gladstone was quite in favour of them, and said that they had adopted them at Hawarden. His son, who is the incumbent, had some difficulty at first, but now everyone has acquiesced and is satisfied. Mr. Street said he thought they would not be universally adopted till the separation of the sexes in church is established, and what he called 'family worship in church' is done away. I stood up a little in favour of the latter, and said I liked to see father, mother, and children all kneeling side by side. Mr. Gladstone remarked, in reply, that he thought, on the other hand, the other plan rather promoted a kind of feeling of responsibility in the worship of children. As an instance of this he mentioned that one day, in All Saints', Margaret Street, he was interested in seeing quite a little boy walk up all by himself into the men's aisle with his books in his hand, and when he came nearer discovered that it was his own son.

We then discussed hymnology, and Mr. Gladstone said he considered Scott's hymn on the Day of Judgment the finest in the English language. My husband asked whether it was not a rendering of the 'Dies Iræ,' which he thinks very fine. Mr. Gladstone said he thought not, though there was sufficient similarity to show that Scott had the 'Dies Iræ' in his mind when he wrote his hymn. He said he had the pleasure of repeating the hymn to Tennyson, who had never heard it before, and who was melted into tears.

On our way to morning church (Mr. Gladstone, Mr. C., my husband, and I inside the sociable) the conversation turned on the Hallams, whom Mr. Gladstone knew, and he praised Arthur and Henry, but chiefly Arthur, who was fully worthy of Tennyson's admiration. Mr. Gladstone said he had ever lamented his loss, for, besides his great intellectual gifts, he would have been a bulwark against modern philosophical scepticism. He noticed the melancholy coincidence of the two brothers dying of

fever, one at Vienna, the other at Leghorn. He himself chanced to be driving along the Corniche road, ignorant of Henry's death, when he met a carriage returning from the South with Mr. Hallam in it. He jumped out and ran after the carriage, and when he had stopped it heard from the broken-hearted father of his second and still more recent loss.

Other conversations took place on other days on various subjects. On one occasion Mr. Gladstone gave his opinion on the character of the English, and of several leading English statesmen of this century. He spoke of a curious point in the English character. Though very brave, he said we were more given to panic than any other nation, and that many of our leading statesmen were great alarmists. Sir Robert Peel was an exception, and he then launched forth in a panegyric over him: 'A noble-minded man, so just, considering what was due to other nations as well as our own rights. Would to God he were alive now!' This, he said, was also the case with the Duke of Wellington, who was likewise a great lover of peace. He, however, was an alarmist. Continuing our conversation on former statesmen, Mr. C. told an anecdote in which it was questioned whether Sir James Graham was a religious man. Mr. Gladstone said he knew him intimately, and was certain that he was. He was never popular. His appearance in the House of Commons, sitting with his hat over his eyes, looked repellent, and Mr. Gladstone had at first a prejudice against him, but on acquaintance he found him kind-hearted and good. He was a first-rate man of business, but better as an administrator than a statesman. When in his prime he was a fair speaker, but declined in his later years. Sidney Herbert had more charm in person, voice, and manner than anyone he knew, always pleasant, yet without flattery or artifice. The Duke of Newcastle had no attraction, but had more of the statesman than either of the others. Down to 1854 the Secretaryships for War and the Colonies were united, owing to our Colonies having mostly been acquired by arms; but when, in the Crimean war, they were separated, the Duke of Newcastle, who had been an excellent Colonial Minister, unhappily chose the War Department, for which he was ill-suited. Kinglake's story of the sleeping Cabinet had a certain foundation in fact, but quite misrepresented the whole nature of Cabinet councils. The policy of the Government had been determined previously, and the despatch was only the formal expression of their views, to which little attention would be given. The Duke, however, did not understand the difference between great and small,

and used, therefore, to read in full despatches from Lord Raglan which were of no importance, and thus weakened the interest of the Cabinet in all that he read. Mr. Gladstone knew who was Kinglake's informant, but he quite misled him.

Mr. C. asked if the Home Secretaryship was not the most important office after the Premiership. 'Not now,' Mr. Gladstone replied, and said that he considered the Foreign Secretaryship the most important ; then the Indian Secretaryship.

Mr. C., who was reading Justin McCarthy's *History of Our Own Times*, asked Mr. Gladstone whether it was true that he had on one occasion mentioned Sheil as a great orator, and said that there were men in whom even drawbacks of voice, manner, &c., were in such entire congruity that you would not wish any alteration, instancing Sheil and two others. Mr. Gladstone assented, and said Chalmers was the second, but he forgot who was the third to whom he had alluded. Dr. Chalmers not only spoke with the very roughest of Scotch accents, but with great peculiarities even of dialect ; but all his defects were in entire harmony with the special character of his eloquence. Mr. Gladstone did not volunteer any information as to where he had made the speech, but, when Mr. C. pressed him on the point, admitted that it was at Dr. Parker's Temple, where he had been invited, however, not to a religious service, but to a meeting for the purpose of discussing oratory.

On reading further, Mr. C. discovered that Dr. Newman was the third orator who had been mentioned by Mr. Gladstone. The latter said that he believed that was the case, though he did not think him as good an instance as the other two. His manner was singularly quiet, but he gave the impression of having so thoroughly thought out and considered all he said, and of such entire earnestness. He went on to talk much of Dr. Newman, whom he had heard preach in his very early days, when he was considered a decided Evangelical and Dr. Pusey something of a Rationalist, and he recollected Bishop Lloyd warning the young men against him for that reason. He did not believe, however, that he ever had any tendency to rationalism, but that he gave that impression from studying so much the German theological writers, and perhaps from doubting the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. This he first taught Mr. Gladstone to doubt, instancing St. Peter's denial of our Lord, which is differently related by the different Evangelists. Mr. Gladstone considered that Pusey very much spoilt his style by so much study of the German writers.

In our conversation on this subject there was much said about

the early religious movement of the so-called Tractarian School. Mr. C. said something about the Tracts being Jesuitical. This Mr. Gladstone denied, and said that when they first appeared their writers had, he believed, no idea of the effect they would produce. They were begun when the late Lord Derby brought forward his motion for suppressing ten of the Irish bishoprics. People appeared at that time, as the writers considered, to have too imperfect a notion of what the Church really was, and to counteract this these Tracts were put forth. Mr. C. said, 'But surely Tract 90 was Jesuitical?' To this Mr. Gladstone assented, and went on to say that he thought Newman's a Jesuitical mind. In one respect he compared him to Lord Westbury, a very different man, but both had the faculty of convincing themselves by their own eloquence through the peculiar subtlety of their genius. The conversation turned upon Lord Westbury, of whom Mr. Gladstone spoke with great gentleness, as if unwilling to blame where he could not praise. Mr. C. said Lord Westbury was not without sensibility, and instanced a circumstance told him by Lord Granville. After the scandal with reference to Lord Westbury's son, Lord Granville met the father, and asked him to dinner, saying, 'We have some pretty women coming, and I think it is a dinner you will like.' He purposely spoke with rather marked kindness, and was astonished at Lord Westbury bursting into tears.

On one occasion our conversation turned upon poetry, and Mr. Gladstone said he thought Oxford had in this century produced greater poets than Cambridge. E. expressed surprise, and was preparing to enumerate the Cambridge poets, when Mr. Gladstone went off into panegyrics on the genius of Swinburne; and Mr. C. intervening with a protest, we lost the opportunity of testing his power of supporting such an assertion by a comparison of the two lists. Several times he expressed his admiration of Tennyson, particularly of 'Guinevere,' which he considered distinctly his finest work, and would not assent to my husband's pleading for 'In Memoriam' as more original and characteristic. He said Panizzi (of whose literary attainments he seemed to think highly) objected to Italian being said to be *derived* from Latin. It *was* Latin in its modern form. Panizzi took his politics from Lord Palmerston. Mr. Gladstone assented to Mr. C.'s statement that Lord Palmerston believed Bacon to be the author of 'Shakespeare.' Of the three greatest poets, Homer, Dante and Shakespeare, he thought the first and last portrayed every form of character. E.



said Shakespeare drew more mixed characters, and showed more subtle refinement and less exaggeration, and instanced Iago as the most complete personification of a villain. To this Mr. Gladstone assented, but said that we must remember the difference of society in the two epochs in which these poets lived—how much more complex it had become in the days of Shakespeare, and afforded, therefore, greater scope for the personification of different characters. He then broke into enthusiastic praise of Homer, who supplied language, thought, taste, nationality to Greece. He was, however, enthusiastic also over Shakespeare's genius, and over his power of so entirely putting himself into the position of his characters that he could even think with their thoughts, as it were. He instanced Cardinal Wolsey, and quoted the lines—

O! 'tis a burden, Cromwell, 'tis a burden  
Too heavy for a man that hopes for Heaven,

saying, 'So true! but how could the man know it? How could he know enough about the cares of State to tell this?' Mr. C. said, 'By putting himself into Wolsey's place.' But Mr. Gladstone was not satisfied with this explanation, but repeated again, with a far-away look in his eyes, 'O! 'tis a burden too heavy for a man that hopes for Heaven!'

He had just been reading Mme. de Rémusat's *Memoirs*, and remarked on the profligacy of Napoleon I.'s Court. My husband said he supposed it was the most unprincipled society recorded in French history. Mr. Gladstone replied that he thought that of Louis XVI. was worse. E. answered that he thought it was less coarse, for 'vice lost half its evil there by losing all its grossness.' Mr. Gladstone answered that that was almost the only foolish thing Burke ever wrote.

We used to play at whist every evening, but Mr. Gladstone would not play more than one rubber, and said he never played after ten at either whist or chess, lest it should excite his brain. Nevertheless, he said he fell asleep at once when he went to bed; and when we asked how he kept out thoughts of politics, he said he sent them away, and called in something else without difficulty. Bright could not do this. His brain was always working upon his speeches. When his health was beginning to suffer, Mr. Gladstone sent him to Dr. (afterwards Sir Andrew) Clark, who asked him why he came, and Bright answered, 'Because Gladstone would give him no peace till he did.'

It will be remembered that in the summer of 1880 there was



considerable anxiety as to the coming harvest, and we therefore all watched the weather with even more than the ordinary amount of interest. We had had a good deal of rain before our visit to Holmbury, but after our arrival there a change for the better took place, over which we all rejoiced. Mr. Gladstone especially hailed every fine day with delight, and on one occasion said that if the fine weather lasted another week it would be worth 1,000,000*l.* to him as Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am glad to say that the fine weather *did* last a week, and that therefore no gloomy anticipation of another bad harvest clouded this pleasant visit, which will always be an agreeable memory in my life, and I hope was some refreshment to him who was at that time called to bear the burden described by Wolsey as 'too heavy for a man that hopes for Heaven.'

SUSAN H. OLDFIELD.

## *Miss Ingelow's Poems.*

NEARLY a year has gone by since the death of Miss Ingelow, whose collected poems are now reprinted in one volume.<sup>1</sup> Miss Ingelow attained a vast popularity, as a poet, in England and America, before the age of organised 'booms.' She did not love or accept notoriety. Her portrait was not in all the illustrated papers. She did not preside over the public dinners of her sex. It is probable that 'Miss Ingelow at Home' was never described; it is probable that Miss Ingelow was never interviewed; it is certain that she never took the public into her confidence as to her 'methods.' We know not, for example, whether she wrote with a quill or a steel pen. In the central Victorian age (which I perfectly well remember) it appears that the world was incurious about these details; at all events, it was uninstructed. Miss Ingelow's only confidences, or confessions, were made about her early age, and did not extend beyond her memories of her third year.

On the death of this lady the obituary notices in the newspapers were necessarily meagre. She had not lived her private life in the public eye. The personal note was even more completely absent from her lyrics than from those of Scott. Experiences she must have had, emotions she must have known, and it is natural to suppose that they colour some of her early pieces, but we are left to conjecture.

Miss Ingelow was born at Boston, in Lincolnshire, in 1820. She was of Lord Tennyson's shire, which (judging from some singularly beautiful fragments of popular tradition collected by Miss Balfour) must be a region with a subconscious stratum of poetical genius. Her mother was Scottish, but we are not told the lady's maiden name, and know not whether the Celt can

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical Works of Jean Ingelow.* Longmans, 1898, pp. 831.

claim his share, as he is apt to do, in this Muse. According to one authority, Miss Ingelow's earliest book came out in 1843, a neighbour of Tennyson's two famous volumes. This error arose from a misprint, probably; *Poems*, by Jean Ingelow, are of 1863. I can remember seeing the slim book in people's hands, but, though then addicted to reading new poems, I do not think that I read, or (what was then the same thing) tried to imitate Miss Ingelow. I did not even know whom Calverley was parodying in his lines about 'Willy, my Willy,' and 'I repeat it was perfectly glorious weather.' I regret this early nescience all the more as I fear we are only fair judges of the poetry which we read when we were young.

Miss Ingelow was a member of the Portfolio Society, which consisted of amateur artists and writers. Among them was the late Mr. Vincent, whose drawings in watercolours were charming. There was also, I believe, my friend the late Mr. Cobb, whom all who knew him at this day deeply regret, an angler after our father Izaak's own heart, and 'now with God,' as Walton says of another. Topics were set by the Portfolio Society for exercises with pen or pencil. Some of Miss Ingelow's poems confess the inspiration of the Portfolio, and, as far as she had a literary 'set,' it was in that Society.

The *Poems* at once became popular; they were read, recited, parodied, and sung. The Americans especially delighted in them, Mr. Lowell and Mr. Holmes were admirers; but popularity could not draw Miss Ingelow from a life 'fugitive and cloistered,' a life of secret kindnesses and secure tranquillity. Living in the central age of Tennysonian influence, Miss Ingelow had a poetic voice and manner of her own. She was not derivative, either in ideas or in melodies. If one were to try to put her qualities in a few words, they might be stated as musical fluency, lucidity, simplicity, and an almost unmatched 'vision' of natural beauty in many kinds and in many regions. In the region of moral ideas she has sympathy, repose, a gentle resignation, delight in nature, sympathy with simple affections and with kindly men. Passion she has little, and that is veiled, but she wrote when effusive passion was not in request. Her exquisite and flawless fluency does not evolve many magical and haunting lines, 'all the charm of all the Muses flowering often in some lonely word.' Her style is not without distinction, but it is devoid of rarity and strange charm. Her appeal, except on rare occasions, is less to poets or devotees of poetry than to the great mass of people

who read poetry in youth, but never dream of being critics or *raffinés*. Thus she was as widely read as Miss Rossetti was little known. A few pieces of Miss Rossetti's take hold of one as nothing of Miss Ingelow's can do, but Miss Ingelow inevitably delighted an infinitely larger world of readers. Them she pleased by her narratives: she had a story to tell. Her success was the success which she would have desired; she added greatly to the sense of the beauty of life, among the mass who like beauty when brought to their doors, as it were, but who do not wander longingly and curiously after it through difficult ways. The bulk of her poetical work is very great and consistently equal: the gems are infrequent. Her strength lay in the direction of what we may call Tennyson's Garden Idylls, and domestic pieces, from *The Miller's Daughter* to *Enoch Arden*. Her ballads, too, like the popular *Bells of Enderby*, had both spirit and refinement, and were admirably well adapted for recitation. But they do not haunt us like *Proud Maisie*, or *The Sands o' Dee*, or stir us like the 'Ballad of the Red Harlaw.' Hers was a distinctly feminine and placid genius. She recognised, and wrought within the circle of her own limitations, though perhaps the *Story of Doom* is an exception to this rule. Mr. Matthew Arnold, so disdainful, or so incurious, of the poetry of his own time, made an exception in favour of Miss Ingelow. Probably he was taken by her tranquillity in an age of moral and scientific shocks to belief. If 'the poet's sad lucidity' is hers, it does not deepen her mood beyond a sweet pensiveness or 'a wise passiveness.' She never attracts or repels by straining after a difficult and perilous novelty of phrase; she indulges in no strenuous and obvious research. So far her poems are 'of the centre.' If rare felicities seldom come to her, she is always the Muse and never the Mænad, the convulsionary of verse. Her poetry does not lack art, but it is never artificial. She is content, for herself, with old ideas, and this is what she has to say of the news of Geology and Mr. Darwin:—

Ah me! and when forgotten and foregone  
 We leave the learning of departed days,  
 And cease the generations past to con,  
 Their wisdom and their ways—

When fain to learn we lean into the dark,  
 And grope to feel the floor of the abyss,  
 Or find the secret boundary lines which mark  
 Where soul and matter kiss

Fair world ! these puzzled souls of ours grow weak  
 With beating their bruised wings against the rim  
 That bounds their utmost flying, when they seek  
 The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain like birds against their wires ;  
 Are sick to reach the vast and the beyond ;—  
 And what avails, if still to our desires  
 Those far-off gulfs respond ?

Contentment comes not therefore ; still there lies  
 An outer distance when the first is hailed,  
 And still for ever yawns before our eyes  
 An *UTMOST*—that is veiled.

Searching those edges of the universe,  
 We leave the central fields a fallow part ;  
 To feed the eye more precious things amerce,  
 And starve the darkened heart.

Then all goes wrong : the old foundations rock ;  
 One scorns at him of old who gazed unshod ;  
 One striking with a pickaxe thinks the shock  
 Shall move the seat of God.

A little way, a very little way  
 (Life is so short), they dig into the rind,  
 And truly they are sorry, so they say,—  
 Sorry for what they find.

But truth is sacred—ay, and must be told :  
 There is a story long beloved of man ;  
 We must forego it, for it will not hold—  
 Nature had no such plan.

And then, if ' God hath said it,' some should cry,  
 ' We have the story from the fountain-head :'  
 Why, then, what better than the old reply,  
 The first ' Yea, *HATH* God said ' ?

The garden, O the garden, must it go,  
 Source of our hope and our most dear regret ?  
 The ancient story, must it no more show  
 How man may win it yet ?

And all upon the Titan child's decree,  
 The baby science, born but yesterday,  
 That in its rash unlearned infancy  
 With shells and stones at play,

And delving in the outworks of this world,  
 And little crevices that it could reach,  
 Discovered certain bones laid up, and furled  
 Under an ancient beach,

And other waifs that lay to its young mind  
 Some fathoms lower than they ought to lie,  
 By gain whereof it could not fail to find  
 Much proof of ancientry,

Hints at a pedigree withdrawn and vast,  
 Terrible deeps, and old obscurities,  
 Or soulless origin, and twilight passed  
 In the primeval seas,

Whereof it tells, as thinking it hath been  
 Of truth not meant for man inheritor;  
 As if this knowledge Heaven had ne'er foreseen  
 And not provided for!

Knowledge ordained to live! although the fate  
 Of much that went before it was—to die,  
 And be called ignorance by such as wait  
 Till the next drift comes by.

These verses probably represent the effect produced on Miss Ingelow's own mind by *The Origin of Species*, and Darwinism in general. The new knowledge, like the old, is doomed

to die,  
 And be called ignorance by such as wait  
 Till the next drift comes by.

Science, like Liberalism at large, has her bankruptcies and, forty years after Miss Ingelow wrote, is beginning to know the little she knows, and even to catch glimpses of somewhat beyond. This poet's strength was in quiet, not to strive or cry, but to wait.

The verses cited probably indicate Miss Ingelow's lifelong attitude towards disturbing ideas, and sum up that philosophy of life in which she rarely dealt. One may conceive that the wisdom, one may almost say the stoicism, of such lines as those quoted was what mainly attracted Mr. Arnold, while the fluency and lucidity of expression have also their charm. Fluency, indeed, was Miss Ingelow's peril as well as her merit. In this, as in a certain luxury of vision, she recalls Spenser, and—on the wrong side of the balance—with a similar result. There are *longueurs* in the equable and musical flow of the verse.

We have mentioned Miss Ingelow's power of vision, power of seeing and painting aspects of the world which her bodily eyes had never looked upon. She even reminds us of what, in the twelfth century, the Arabian author, Ibn Khaloudn, says of the seers who gaze into mirrors or crystals, 'concentrating all the senses into the noblest, the sense of sight.' They behold what is not present to the normal gaze, and of what is present to the normal gaze they lose sensible knowledge, says Ibn Khaloudn. As an example of this gift in Miss Ingelow (and there are many examples) we may choose

## SAND MARTINS.

I passed an inland-cliff precipitate ;  
 From tiny caves peeped many a soot-black poll ;  
 In each a mother-martin sat elate,  
 And of the news delivered her small soul.

Fantastic chatter ! hasty, glad, and gay,  
 Whereof the meaning was not ill to tell :  
 ' Gossip, how wags the world with you to-day ?'  
 ' Gossip, the world wags well, the world wags well.'

And heark'ning, I was sure their little ones  
 Were in the bird-talk, and discourse was made  
 Concerning hot sea-bights and tropic suns,  
 For a clear sultriness the tune conveyed ;—

And visions of the sky as of a cup  
 Hailing down light on pagen Pharaoh's sand,  
 And quivering air-waves trembling up and up,  
 And blank stone faces marvellously bland.

' When should the young be fledged and with them hie  
 Where costly day drops down in crimson light ?  
 (Fortunate countries of the fire-fly  
 Swarm with blue diamonds all the sultry night,

' And the immortal moon takes turn with them).  
 When should they pass again by that red land,  
 Where lovely mirage works a brodered hem  
 To fringe with phantom-palms a robe of sand ?

' When should they dip their breast again and play  
 In slumbrous azure pools clear as the air,  
 Where rosy-winged flamingos fish all day,  
 Stalking amid the lotus blossom fair ?



'Then, over podded tamarinds bear their flight,  
While cassias blossom in the zone of calms,  
And so betake them to a south sea-bight  
To gossip in the crowns of cocoa-palms

'Whose roots are in the spray. O, haply there  
Some dawn, white-winged they might chance to find  
A frigate standing in to make more fair  
The loneliness unaltered of mankind.

'A frigate come to water: nuts would fall,  
And nimble feet would climb the flower-flushed strand,  
While northern talk would ring, and therewithal  
The martins would desire the cool north land.

'And all would be as it had been before;  
Again at eve there would be news to tell;  
Who passed should hear them chant it o'er and o'er,  
"Gossip, how wags the world?" "Well, gossip, well."

This is an exquisite finished poem, and a worthy pendant to Gautier's *Les Hirondelles*. To read these two pieces together is to recognise in Miss Ingelow the merit of Gautier, a very great and choice poet, *un raffiné*, though she is not always or often on this level. There are other exceptions to her equable flow; for example, in the vision which recalls but probably was not inspired by Poe's *Raven*. The 'weird' was not a province cultivated by Miss Ingelow as a rule, but here she enters it, stumbling, alas! on the threshold, at the line

*The bird went on to name him!*

A girl is musing on her absent lover, who lies dead in a crevice of the Alps. Then comes the symbolic vision, with the message of his death:

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless and storm-broken:  
A great white bird sat on it, with neck stretched out to sea;  
Unto somewhat which was sailing in a skiff the bird had spoken,  
And a trembling seized my spirit, for they talked of me.

I was the old man's daughter, the bird went on to name him;  
'He loved to count the starlings as he sat in the sun;  
Long ago he served with Nelson, and his story did not shame him:  
Ay, the old man was a good man—and his work was done.'

The skiff was like a crescent, ghost of some moon departed,

Frail, white, she rocked and curtsied as the red wave she crossed,  
And the thing within sat paddling, and the crescent dipped and darted,  
Flying on, again was shouting, but the words were lost.

I said, 'That thing is hooded ; I could hear but that floweth

The great hood below its mouth : ' then the bird made reply,

'If they know not, more's the pity, for the little shrew-mouse knoweth,  
And the kite knows, and the eagle, and the glead and pye.'

Here the artist seems to touch what was so far remote from her common range, the *bizarre*, and the terrible, dread, and vague, and vivid, and grotesque. Here, again, on a theme of Coleridge's, *A Discovery made Too Late*, is one of Miss Ingelow's rare lyrics of passion :

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,

My old sorrow wakes and cries,

For I know there is dawn in the far, far north,

And a scarlet sun doth rise ;

Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,

And the icy founts run free,

And the bergs begin to bow their heads,

And plunge, and sail in the sea.

O my lost love, and my own, own love,

And my love that loved me so !

Is there never a chink in the world above

Where they listen for words from below ?

Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,

I remember all that I said,

And now thou wilt hear me no more—no more

Till the sea gives up her dead.

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail

To the ice-fields and the snow ;

Thou wert sad, for thy love did nought avail,

And the end I could not know ;

*How could I tell I should love thee to-day,*

*Whom that day I held not dear ?*

*How could I know I should love thee away*

*When I did not love thee anear ?*

We shall walk no more through the sodden plain

With the faded bents o'erspread,

We shall stand no more by the seething main

While the dark wrack drives o'erhead ;

We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,  
 Where thy last farewell was said;  
 But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again  
 When the sea gives up her dead.

It is an old story, that, like all old stories, 'ends in song,'  
 'till the sea gives up her dead'—and the earth.

The most remarkable of the pieces, in which we seem to hear  
 the beat of a heart commonly so placid, and the echo of a personal  
 emotion, is too long to cite in full, *A Dead Year*. In this poem  
 there is a novel sound in the solemn 'chain of verse,' a funereal  
 splendour and majesty in the sepulchring of the love that may be  
 buried but that will not die.

#### *A DEAD YEAR.*

I took a year out of my life and story—  
 A dead year, and said, 'I will hew thee a tomb!  
 "All the kings of the nations lie in glory;"  
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom;  
 Swathed in linen, and precious unguents old;  
 Painted with cinnabar, and rich with gold.

'Silent they rest, in solemn salvatory,  
 Sealed from the moth and the owl and the flittermouse—  
 Each with his name on his brow.

"All the kings of the nations lie in glory,  
 Every one in his own house:"  
 Then why not thou?

'Year,' I said, 'thou shalt not lack  
 Bribes to bar thy coming back;  
 Doth old Egypt wear her best  
 In the chambers of her rest?  
 Doth she take to her last bed  
 Beaten gold, and glorious red?  
 Envy not! for thou wilt wear  
 In the dark a shroud as fair;  
 Golden with the sunny ray  
 Thou withdrawest from my day;  
 Wrought upon with colours fine  
 Stolen from this life of mine:  
 Like the dusty Libyan kings,  
 Lie with two wide-open wings  
 On thy breast, as if to say,  
 On these wings hope flew away;

And so housed, and thus adorned,  
 Not forgotten, but not scorned,  
 Let the dark for evermore  
 Close thee when I close the door;  
 And the dust for ages fall  
 In the creases of thy pall;  
 And no voice nor visit rude  
 Break thy seal'd solitude.'

I took the year out of my life and story,  
 The dead year, and said, 'I have hewed thee a tomb!  
 "All the kings of the nations lie in glory;"  
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom;  
 But for the sword, and the sceptre, and diadem,  
 Sure thou didst reign like them.'

So the mourner re-enters the *Mastaba* to look upon his dead.

And I entered. On her bier  
 Quiet lay the buried year;  
 I sat down where I could see  
 Life without and sunshine free,  
 Death within. And I between,  
 Waited my own heart to wean  
 From the shroud that shaded her  
 In the rock-hewn sepulchre—  
 Waited till the dead should say,  
 'Heart, be free of me this day'—  
 Waited with a patient will—  
 AND I WAIT BETWEEN THEM STILL.

I take the year back to my life and story,  
 The dead year, and say, 'I will share in thy tomb.  
 "All the kings of the nations lie in glory;"  
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom!  
 They reigned in their lifetime with sceptre and diadem,  
 But thou excellest them;  
 For Life doth make thy grave her oratory,  
 And the crown is still on thy brow;  
 "All the kings of the nations lie in glory,"  
 And so dost thou.'

Surely that burying our dead affections out of our sight,  
 concerning which people speak so easily, and that amorous  
 ritual of the tomb were never more solemnly and sumptuously  
 celebrated—in vain; 'for Life doth make thy grave her oratory.'  
 Passion cannot be denied to a poet who has thus celebrated the

funeral of a sentiment, that is not dead but sleepeth, is not of this world, but of the communion of the souls; or, as she elsewhere sings—

My love! He stood at my right hand,  
 His eyes were grave and sweet.  
 Methought he said, 'In this far land,  
 O, is it thus we meet!  
 Ah, maid most dear, I am not here;  
 I have no place—no part—  
 No dwelling more by sea or shore,  
 But only in thy heart.'  
 O fair dove! O fond dove!  
 Till night rose over the bourne,  
 The dove on the mast, as we sailed fast,  
 Did mourn, and mourn, and mourn.

Passages like these elevate Miss Ingelow above the 'popular poets,' who are not really poets at all, but who express blameless emotions in easy verse, who give to the general reader ideas which are, or easily might be, his own, in language rather better than that in which he could clothe them. Most generations have their poet or poets of this amiable sort. Their works are much in request, where students do not care for the great or the little masters, for Shakespeare or Suckling, Milton or Carew. The many editions of these mild mediocre minstrels seem 'an uncouth mercy' to people who know poetry when they see it. But such writers give a harmless enjoyment, and nobody should blame them for taking themselves with perfect seriousness. Read the works of Mr. Tupper: they are not quite so bad as you probably suppose: they exactly suited the English and American public which was still puzzled by Tennyson, and had not yet formed itself into Browning Societies. Longfellow, again, has been spoken of (absurdly, I venture to think) as 'an American Tupper.' There are many moments of true poetry in Longfellow, and there is also a popular element which, to be honest, is not so poetical. Miss Ingelow never "dropped into poetry" like *The Psalm of Life*, or *Excelsior*, and the popular element in her versified tales of the domestic affections must not blind us to the truly poetical element illustrated by the passages cited. *The Bells of Enderby*, with its needless efforts at archaic spelling, is not her masterpiece, though perhaps it is her best known composition. It is in her work, like *The May Queen*, or *The Revenge*, in Tennyson's; it is agreeably obvious, and the joy of those to whom

*The Lotus Eaters* or *Marian in the South*, or *A Dead Year* is caviare.

Though the taste for narratives in verse is dead, or dying, Miss Ingelow's little novels in rhyme were eagerly welcomed, and still are welcome. Of these perhaps the best is *The Letter L*, with its four characters and its fortunate conclusion. One feels certain that to-day most minstrels would make *The Letter L* end otherwise: the hero would not be so entirely 'the man of moral prudence,' when his old love returned, beautiful as ever, married, and the possessor of a moor and a salmon river. These charms assuredly tried constancy 'very high,' in the case of the man, who had himself married a lady merely because she was so obviously in love with him. One does not feel at all certain as to how *The Letter L* would end in ordinary life or in prose, but Miss Ingelow, in verse, had no doubts. The metre is an unusual metre for a narrative poem of considerable length, but with what unfailing dexterity and natural ease it is managed!

His eyes were bent upon the sand ;  
 Unfathomed deeps within them lay.  
 A slender rod was in his hand—  
     A hazel spray.

Her eyes were resting on his face,  
 As shyly glad, by stealth to glean  
 Impressions of his manly grace  
     And guarded mien ;

The mouth with steady sweetness set,  
 And eyes conveying unaware  
 The distant hint of some regret  
     That harboured there.

She gazed, and in the tender flush  
 That made her face like roses blown,  
 And in the radiance and the hush,  
     Her thought was shown.

It was a happy thing to sit  
 So near, nor mar his reverie ;  
 She looked not for a part in it,  
     So meek was she.

But it was solace for her eyes,  
 And for her heart that yearned to him,  
 To watch apart in loving wise  
     Those musings dim.

*Afternoon at a Parsonage* suggests a clerical Lotus Land, and has Miss Ingelow's quality of copiousness, but the speech of the blind man shows remarkable power of vision :

Be kind, sweet memory ! O desert me not !  
 For oft thou show'st me lucent opal seas,  
 Fringed with their cocoa-palms, and dwarf red crags  
 Whereon the placid moon doth 'rest her chin ;'  
 For oft by favour of thy visitings  
 I feel the dimness of an Indian night,  
 And lo ! the sun is coming. Red as rust  
 Between the latticed blind his presence burns,  
 A ruby ladder running up the wall ;  
 And all the dust, printed with pigeon's feet,  
 Is reddened, and the crows that stalk anear  
 Begin to trail for heat their glossy wings,  
 And the red flowers give back at once the dew,  
 For night is gone, and day is born so fast,  
 And is so strong, that, huddled as in flight,  
 The fleeting darkness paleth to a shade,  
 And while she calls to sleep and dreams 'Come on,'  
 Suddenly waked, the sleepers rub their eyes,  
 Which having opened, lo ! she is no more.

Another element in Miss Ingelow's popularity was her affection for the sea and the coast of Lincolnshire. One of her hurried biographers in the press tells about her Quaker horror of war, yet she sang of the defeat of the Armada, and told us (what a great Power at this moment would be glad to know) 'where are the galleons of Spain !' 'He blew with his winds and they were scattered.' To be sure, even in this patriotic piece, Miss Ingelow shows more pleasure in her imagined idyll of love than in the actual fighting. But she is not so Quakerlike as she has been called.

*The Story of Doom*, a legend of the Deluge, needs antediluvian leisure in the reader, and there is something difficult in preserving perfect seriousness over the connubial compliments paid to his wife by Noah before the launch. It is Miss Ingelow's most ambitious effort : she was meant for other things ; indeed one knows not what poet, except Milton or Victor Hugo, was fitted to cope with the Flood !

Miss Ingelow's work is so copious that there is room for selection of favourites by each reader, and I have ventured to indicate mine. Her verse flows like a chalk stream, crystal clear,



over the green white-starred tresses of crowfoot, through English scenes, beneath elm and willow, among meadows rich with marsh marigold, and musical with singing birds. There be mightier waters that wander in the world, wider rivers bearing argosies of thought; but here is an English stream with its own peculiar beauties, peaceful and pellucid. Not surrounded by mountains and fed from fathomless lakes, like the waters of Wordsworth: not racing and breaking over boulders and down passes, like the streams of Scott, Miss Ingelow's brook murmurs placidly, the life of the landscape, past grey English homesteads, revealing in an added beauty the gracious water-flowers beneath its current, and winning with its own modest and kindly charm. We may end by citing the sonnet which sums up her philosophy—the idea which she applied to life.

*THOUGH ALL GREAT DEEDS.*

Though all great deeds were proved but fables fine,  
Though earth's old story could be told anew,  
Though the sweet fashions loved of them that sue  
Were empty as the ruined Delphian shrine—  
Though God did never man, in words benign,  
With sense of His great Fatherhood endue,  
Though life immortal were a dream untrue,  
And He that promised it were not divine—  
Though soul, though spirit were not, and all hope  
Reaching beyond the bourne, melted away;  
Though virtue had no goal and good no scope,  
But both were doomed to end with this our clay—  
Though all these were not,—to the ungraced heir  
Would this remain,—to live, as though they were.

ANDREW LANG.

## *How My Lady Leagued with the Smugglers.*

### I.

‘**C**ARRIAGE bin took out again, zur, an’ t’ harses be that lamentaäble flogged this marnin’, I’ll lay they’ve done anigh on thirty miles last night, though how them rascals got at ’em again I doänt knaw.’

The old coachman stood at the window, his face aglow with wrathful excitement, and My Lady, teapot suspended in hand, turned hastily round. But the Rector, despite his seventy years, sprang nimbly to his feet.

‘Rascals! Rogues! I’ll string ’em up, I will. What a penalty for being the only horse owner in the place!’ he exclaimed, hurrying off, through hall, house, and garden, towards the stables. ‘Upon my soul, I’ll make a row *this* time!’

It was not the first by any means. The Rector’s chestnuts had no equals for pace and breeding anywhere along the countryside; besides, in that year of grace, 1830, few people owned horses at all in the little seafaring district of Dewshaven, though to-day, as everyone knows, it is quickly becoming one of the most fashionable watering-places in East Sussex. And of late certain persons other than the rightful owner had successfully proved the worth of the Rector’s property, for on several occasions horses and carriage had been mysteriously taken out of the stables by night, only to be found in the morning bearing every mark of forced pace and hard driving. With such skill, too, had this ‘forced loan’ been hitherto effected that as yet neither master nor man could discover how to secure the stables against it. Not but what it was easy enough to guess the probable authors of the outrage, since the wholesale system of *free trade*—otherwise smuggling—which at that time honeycombed every seafaring community with its elastic code of morality was held accountable

for most misdeeds, whether of violence or fraud. Sussex had a more notorious reputation than any other Southern county, both for the ingenuity displayed and the downright brutality which characterised the proceedings of the smugglers, and hardly a man in any of the villages within thirty miles of the coast but was implicated, either by practice or connivance.

Giles met his master at the stable doors.

Panting, trembling, caked with mud up to the thighs, and flecked with foam, stood the four chestnuts, the pride of their owner's eye, the darlings of his heart—always excepting, of course, his beautiful niece, 'My Lady,' as she was called, who had long since made her home with him, and prevented his entire absorption into the ways of bachelordom.

The chestnuts whinnied plaintively, turning round their heads to be caressed as the Rector came near, and the strained look left their bloodshot eyes with the recognition of a friendly presence. Thoroughbred beasts as they were, unused to spur or whip, it was the wounding of their pride and glory of well being that hurt them most.

The Rector stooped, and felt each leg from fetlock to thigh, passed his hand with the careful precision of knowledge over every muscle, examined each joint, and lightly smoothed the marks of spurs on the near leader of his famous Four-in-Hand—marks which showed that the postilion-riding of the night before had been practised by a tyro at the art. However, his examination concluded, the lines cleared off his face, and he straightened himself with a sigh of relief.

'Well, not much harm done this time,' he observed good-humouredly. 'A day or two's rest will set 'em right. Carriage smashed?'

'E'en-a'most stodge t'mak a row o' grave mounds,' growled Giles. 'I shan't do 'em this bout. Dang 'em.'

'Hullo, what's that?' exclaimed the Rector, and he pointed to a brown oval-shaped object lying at the foot of the carriage, close to the stable door. Giles stooped.

'Tis a leetle barrel, surely,' he observed drily, and then master and man went off into a guffaw of laughter. The Rector examined the keg, with a twinkle in his eye.

'Proof positive of our nightbirds, at all events. Payment in kind—French brandy for French leave. Keep it, Giles, to moisten your carriage cleaning, and, if you're wise, use your own counsel with it. You'll find it the right sort of stuff, I make no doubt.'

And with that, laughing quietly to himself, he left the old coachman, and went to regain breakfast and niece.

'Well?' asked My Lady. She ate her toast calmly, less because she felt unmoved than because she held the display of undue emotion to be a mark of ill-breeding. She was a rarely dignified young woman, though no one ever found her wanting in kindly courtesy. Only she was not one to be treated lightly, much less with familiarity. My Lady came of an old Scotch family: the blood in her veins was inherited from too many Jacobite ancestors to predispose her to much sympathy with a Hanoverian Government, though her love of peace and order naturally resented undue handling of her uncle's property.

'Same old game, my love,' said the Rector. 'Smugglers, of course, making free with my belongings. And I can't do anything to stop it, or I shall simply find the beasts hamstrung some fine morning. They landed a pretty cargo last night, I'll be bound. Probably over Rye way; my horses out means distance! However, Captain McDougall will be over in the forenoon, and we shall hear. I only hope there's been no skirmish.'

My Lady turned pale. Skirmishes were frequent enough between Revenue officers and smugglers, and often disastrous, for life was held tolerably cheap at such times. The Revenue had their work cut out for them pitted against a community every man of which was pledged to the brotherhood, and public opinion went to regard smuggling as a very venial sin compared with the atrocities which had been committed under cover of the law by the press-gang, still well within the memories of the people, not to speak of the inordinate duties fettering honest trade.

But one ounce of personal feeling is worth a ton of prejudices or arguments either way. And there was more than friendly interest between this high-spirited girl and the young officer just sent down to take command of the county, so no wonder her cheek became suddenly blanched at the suggestion of danger.

'You—you don't think there need have been fighting?' she asked, with a timidity very unusual to her nature.

'Scarcely, scarcely, or my carriage would hardly be back by now!' said her uncle, intent on grilled bones. 'Oh, no danger, my love,' he added, with a glimmering of the situation breaking in upon his breakfast-obscured horizon; 'or Giles would have had the news in the village long ago.'

'I think, if you would excuse me, dear uncle, I will go to my housekeeping,' said My Lady. 'There are flowers to be arranged,

and my birds to attend to; and besides, I should like to see the poor horses myself!' She wanted an excuse to be moving, as a restless mind, ill at ease, frequently does.

'Oh, be off, my love. One excuse will do!' cried the genial Rector. So away My Lady went, till Captain McDougall came to wander with her through the leafless November garden, and assure her himself of his safety. No outside news had reached him, and this added proof of the subtlety he had to deal with no doubt accounted for the annoyance and excitement with which he heard of the night's work. The humour of this masterly use of the enemies' arms, so to speak, in the evasion of the law, was not lost upon him, burning as he was to distinguish himself and show a dilatory Government which of its servants it should hasten to honour by promotion. The Rector held his peace, and his opinions. Annoyance at incompetent driving of his horses he might feel, but humorous appreciation of the skill with which the matter had been carried through followed quickly on its heels. As to denouncing his own parishioners, such an idea never seriously crossed his mind. His influence amongst them was great, his judgment tempered by the experience of age: he preferred passing over what he knew to be the result quite as much of circumstances as of the frailty of human nature. Moreover, as a shrewd bit of human nature himself, he was too well versed in knowledge of it to expect perfection.

My Lady, however, with less reason, was the more influenced by the irate young officer's zeal. She listened with eager attention to his eloquent denunciations of law-breakers; sympathised with his plans as though she meant to become a Government spy next day; and worked herself up to equal minds with him on the entire subject, till no one thing seemed to be of so much importance as the securing of Government revenues!

## II.

'THE horses are at the door, my dear. Are you ready?'

The Rector stood in the square oak-panelled hall, wrapping his warm driving cloak round him. Down the stairs, with a swish and swirl of her silken petticoats, came My Lady, all white satin, diamonds and lace, decked out for the big county ball which was to take place that night the further side of Eastbourne. And very well she knew she would be the loveliest woman present, since such knowledge was not likely to be withheld from the

belle of a London season, the toast of two counties, and the acknowledged beauty of half a dozen fashionable resorts. Yet I think the soft eager beating of her heart was less from personal pride than the hope of being found lovely in the one pair of eyes she wished to please, and that her smiles were as much inspired by the expectation of her lover's gratification as by vanity.

He had told her he might be there, if duty allowed him. And she wished to see him, just as she longed to hear in so many words what his eyes had already told her, what every gesture had betrayed, what it needed but a whisper to certify. Was there room for the desire of conquest elsewhere, for vaingloriousings, for complacent self-contemplation? Not with My Lady. Yet she was young, the scene when they arrived brilliancy itself, her progress from room to room a triumphal one. Blood runs to fever-point easily under such circumstances, and so, though the face she looked for was not there, My Lady enjoyed herself very well.

The Rector, though relegated to the position of chaperon, found the time pass pleasantly enough. His jovial countenance was familiar and acceptable to all. He liked to chat with his old cronies, exchanging deprecatory criticisms on the rising generation; to stroll from room to room overlooking the whist players' hands; or to discuss a glass of good old port with a neighbour, his watchful eye all the time overlooking his niece, whose charms he had no intention of permitting to become cheapened for the want of such surveillance.

He was thus engaged when a message was brought to him by one of his parishioners to say that a sick man, who had long been ill, was at the point of death, and urgently desired his presence and the last ministrations of the Church.

There was no room for hesitation; the Rector was all readiness at once. He only delayed to find his niece, and make the best arrangement he could to suit her convenience as well as his own.

'I must take the horses, my love,' he said. 'Wilkins is so far off, and time presses. However, it's quite early still, so I'll come back for you in about an hour's time. 'Tisn't midnight yet, and no one will dream of leaving before two. I'll ask our good hostess to chaperone you meanwhile.'

My Lady acquiesced contentedly enough; she had, in fact, a lingering hope the Captain might yet turn up, and it was not till the carriage was announced a little after one o'clock that she gave up all expectation. To keep the horses—the two priceless chestnuts—even for a moment, was, however, not to be thought

of, and so, accepting the situation, since she could not alter it, she made her adieux. A slight change of plan awaited her, for the Rector sent word that he was unable to leave the sick bed so soon, and wished her to call for him instead, but this almost suited her mood better: she longed for silence, to weave her dreams undisturbed.

The night was dark and starless, cold even for November. She snuggled down into her swansdown-lined cloak, and gave herself up to the hopes, fears, doubts, anxieties, and waves of happy memories, which go to fill so large a part of the horizon of courtship. . . .

All of a sudden came a check—the horses swerved—plunged violently—threw back on their haunches—and came to a dead stop. There was a sound of steps on the leaf-sodden ground. My Lady awoke with a start.

‘Giles, Giles, what is it?’

The carriage door was flung open, the eye of a dark lantern turned full upon her, and a man, with a mask covering the upper part of his face, put his foot inside.

‘No harm meant or intended to you, My Lady,’ he said in a rough voice, which, however, her sharp ear instantly detected had no touch of the Sussex vernacular. ‘But your horses are wanted for a better purpose. Will ye step out, or take a dead man inside to be your company?’

The angry blood leapt to My Lady’s face. She was bolt upright in an instant.

‘Man!’ she exclaimed, ‘to whom are you speaking? How dare you presume to stop me! Giles, Thomas, drive on!’

‘Not so fast, though ye speak well, an’ not without reason,’ retorted the man coolly, and with a faint sound of grim amusement discernible in his tone. ‘But time’s precious. Will ye choose, or take your chance?’

My Lady hesitated. Frightened she was, but not half so frightened as indignant. She had not Highland blood for nothing.

‘Leave my own carriage! I certainly stay here!’ she said, decisively.

There was a slight scuffle. Dark figures gathered all round, but the night was so black she could not even guess her whereabouts. Some one sprang in, and out went the light. She saw in dim outline a huddled-up form dragged in, and laid down against the further door, and she pulled her skirts shudderingly



around her, and drew up her toes as high as she could to avoid contact. Her companion took his seat opposite her in the further corner. No word was spoken; the door was shut; crack went the curling whip-lash, and away went the horses breaking into a mad, reckless gallop. Oh! how they swung through the air, the stillness only broken by the swish of the wind as they cut athwart it, the tramp, tramp of the flying hoofs, and, for her, the agitated beating of her own heart! She folded her arms tightly over her breast, trying to still her pulses. Anger—the sense of outraged dignity, insult—stood her in place of courage.

Suddenly her companion spoke.

‘We’m unaccountable sorry t’ incommode yer, mistress, but ye’ll be setten doun home dappen we’re done this job. It be a matter o’ life an’ death t’ us. But yer haint got no call to be afeard nohows.’

‘I am not in the least alarmed,’ vouchsafed My Lady stiffly. Then, suddenly recollecting, ‘My uncle? Tell me. Not hurt; nothing wrong with him? Pray God, speak!’

‘Nay for sure. He’s wi’ t’ sick man, and knows nout but that ye’re safe t’ whoam. You’ve no call to put yourself in no such tarr’ble gurt hoe over it. ’Twas I took t’ reins from your man, whom I reckon is somewheres agin t’ Pemsey, wheres I left un over his mug. Nor tain’t t’ fust time, neither, as yourn harses ha’ saved a good chap from t’ gallows. Nor, I’ll allow, t’wont be t’ laäste, I bluv.’

‘You’re a smuggling gang!’ exclaimed My Lady, forgetting all prudence.

‘Bide whist, missus! A still tongue in t’ head keeps her on, mayhap. An’ remember that!’ he added significantly.

My Lady lapsed into silence. Tales of the utter unscrupulousness of these men when desperate were familiar to her, although she felt tolerably sure that, since everything pointed to the plan being a preconcerted one, and that these men knew well with whom they had to deal, no personal injury was to be feared—under propitious circumstances!

But there must have been a scrimmage somewhere—men killed; perhaps this was why——! . . . An awful fear overshadowed her, held her heart in a vice; she moved restlessly. Her foot struck the figure lying on the carriage floor—there came a groan.

‘Oh, he’s *not* dead!’ she cried involuntarily, instinctive womanly pity overpowering all other feelings. ‘Oh, can we not

do something? He may be dying only from our neglect now. Help me to raise him. Strike a light! Oh, if I could but see!

'Mappen he is alive, poor chap,' said the other gruffly. 'But light I dursnt, so he must e'en die if 'tis upo' that rackoning!'

'Die!' cried My Lady, roused now for humanity's sake. 'Die! Shame! If you're afraid of *me*—well there, I'll give you my word not to betray you! But there has been already too much blood shed!'

The fellow hesitated.

'Gie us yourn hand on it,' he said. 'One life's o' less 'count than six.'

'Six, six!' thought My Lady. 'Are there six of these awful creatures to deal with?'

But she stretched out her hand in the darkness, and felt it taken into a hard horny palm.

'Now swear, Missus.'

'You know me well enough,' she returned with proud significance; 'and that never has man or woman had reason to mistrust my word.'

'An' that's true,' he replied. 'So, do as you will, but if ye play us false t' blood be on yourn head.'

He struck tinder and flint, and relit the lantern.

My Lady's first look, prompted by curiosity, was for him! But when once her eyes fell on the man at her feet, she forgot all else.

His head had fallen forward, blood gushing from a gaping cut right across it—the clean, deep sweep of a cutlass' backhanded stroke: his face, pale and streaked, was half hidden by the falling, longish hair, matted and damp.

My Lady shook with horror, terror, disgust, but only for a moment did she shrink. In the twinkling of an eye she had turned up the hem of her gown, and torn off the deep flounce of her white silk petticoat.

'Have you a drop of water, brandy—anything?'

'Oh, aye, *brandy*, I rackon!' with a grim laugh. He dragged out a flask, and held it with rough goodwill as she wetted her handkerchief and cleared the brows and face of the dirt and clotted blood disfiguring them. Then, with deft fingers, she made and fixed an impromptu bandage. Her blood cooled with action, her balance of mind restored itself. Her next words had all the ring of command.

‘Now put your hand so—under him. And when I give the word, *lift*.’

She presented a weird sight enough, with her dark curls tumbling over her fair, uncovered neck, arms and hands stained red, the purity of her white skirts all spotted and splashed, while at each movement she made the flickering light flashed on the diamonds till they sparkled and danced in their cold mocking brilliancy.

The fellow obeyed in a silence which might mean anything from surprise to admiration. My Lady, gathering up the folds of her dress, pillowed the wounded man’s head against her knee, and busied herself in continuously wiping his face with the moistened cambric.

And on through the blackness of the night they sped over the marshes, where the keen wind, whistling across the dykes and bare flat pastures, roused the peewits to complaint, and sent the plovers whirring out of their nests in discomfited petulance.

Now they had left Pevensey and the marshes far behind, striking into the woods, through which the carriage road ran its narrow, uneven way. The chestnuts knew better than to stumble, but the ruts were freezing under their very feet: the carriage swayed and lurched from side to side. And still the mad pace was kept up.

‘Fegs! but we’m anigh Kingdom come that time, I rackon!’ muttered the man once; otherwise all was silence. Suddenly, like arrows from a bow, there shot out of the brushwood on either side a swarm of mounted men, chasing, circling, closing all round.

‘Halt!’ rang out the order. ‘Halt! Who goes there!’

From front and back, from right and left, they bore down in overwhelming numbers—seizing the horses’ heads—forcing them back. In vain the drivers lashed and struggled to tread down a way; the brutes, more than half tired out, stopped without further effort, and then, with a violent rocking, a sickening shiver of every board and spring, which drew from My Lady a shriek of real terror, the carriage came to a standstill!

At the sound of her voice her companion uttered a loud, fierce curse, and in an instant jammed the lantern down between them.

‘By God. We’re lost! ’Tis them Revenue Dogs!’

Round on my Lady he turned, seized her wrists in a vicious grip, and flung her against the window.

‘Now ’tis in yourn hands,’ he cried savagely. ‘Keep t’ yer word an’ yer will. There’s yer friends!’

His touch roused every feeling in her to fury. She dashed back the insolent grasp; shook herself free; her heart beat in a paroxysm of choking anger—and then her eye fell on the still, pallid face she had tended, and a sudden incomprehensible thrill of pity, of natural shrinking from the shedding of more blood, however lawless, checked her first impulse.

‘Give way,’ she said. ‘You shall see how I keep my word!’

And with that she beat against the window sash with her clenched fist, till it fell with a bang, as the riders came crowding round. Out she thrust head and shoulders, blocking all view of the interior of the vehicle, and in a voice thrilling with, I know not what, but which to those she addressed seemed only quivering with just indignation—

‘And who are you,’ she cried, ‘to stop a lady’s carriage in this fashion? Who is it I see there?’

Those nearest the door fell back in a confused *mêlée*.

‘Good Heavens! My Lady, *is it you?*’ cried the leader.

‘And who else should it be?’ retorted My Lady, her eyes glittering like black diamonds, and the colour on either cheek fixed in a hard dark spot. But oh, how her heart leapt at the sound of his voice! ‘*Safe, safe!*’ rang through her brain, in a pæan of thanksgiving. She had scarcely realised before how this terrible dread of injury having befallen the man she loved had had her in its clutches.

‘Who else, Captain McDougall? I am returning from my ball at Haddingly, and am making a round to pick up my uncle who was called off to see a dying parishioner. Why this stoppage? One would think we were back in the days of highway-men!’

‘Ten thousand pardons! A terrible mistake—we mistook you entirely. Good heavens, let me explain!’

Stammering, confused, horrified, the Captain rolled off his horse like lightning, and came up to the window. My Lady waved him back.

‘No nearer, Captain McDougall, no nearer! It is cold, and I wish to get home. Since you know me, all is well. Can we go on?’

But McDougall came closer, till his head was on a level with hers.

‘Tell me you forgive me,’ he said, under his breath, a catch in his voice. ‘You cannot blame me more than I do myself for

making such a mistake. I can't explain all now ; but the fact is we had reason to believe, after what happened the other night, your horses would be out again on the same business ! We've news of a big landing to be attempted to night, and our outposts are all round. I haven't come up with our surprise party yet, but we were waiting here to intercept the rogues on their way with the cargo, in case by any chance they'd slipped by. And not recognising your drivers——'

'Giles went with my uncle, these are—hired men.'

'Well, they quite misled us ; you've a couple behind, too, you don't generally have, but you're wise to get a good escort together out by night.'

He came nearer. 'Your pardon !' he murmured.

'Pardon, pardon, oh yes, always'—distracted between fear and desperation, knowing each word could be heard, trembling with forebodings of evil mischance. 'Now, good-night.'

'Say, rather, *Au Revoir*. I may call to-morrow ? Let me close the window for you, and see your rugs are comfortably tucked round you. It's cold.'

'No, No, NO !' shrieked My Lady, self-control giving way. 'My—my maid is here asleep. She—she was ill, and, and—is partly undressed ! Pray drive on. Oh, forgive me, but I—I——'

He drew back, smiling at her incoherence.

'Drive on,' he cried to the man on the box. There was a moment's pause, during which his eyes met hers in a confidence that almost seemed to her to atone for the terrors of the past night. But suddenly, even as she looked, his face changed : the smile faded, he stepped abruptly back, and then, as the horses started off, all was swallowed up in the darkness.

My Lady drew back with relief strangely mitigated by another less happy feeling : her shoulder came into sharp contact with some cold, hard metal. She turned half round, to see the nozzle of a pistol—the upturned lantern throwing a gleam on the barrel—hastily lowered. It was all too much. She sank into her seat, shaking from head to foot with tremulous, tearless sobs.

It seemed a lifetime before the carriage stopped again, though not in reality above ten minutes.

The door was quietly opened : as though in a dream she heard the drivers descending from the box, the wounded man lifted out, and the door shut to again. Time, place, consciousness of life itself seemed passing away from her. She neither moved nor gave any heed to what was going on. Her whilom companion

stood outside, and leant his arms for a moment on the sill of the window.

'You'm a brave heart,' he said slowly. 'And noan afeard to keep t' your word. So far, an' for t' loan of yourn coach we're grateful. Ye're goin' home now straight. Good-night, and we thank you, My Lady.'

He withdrew his head, then put it in again.

'Gin you'd telled that chap,' he added, 'I'd a pistol coverin' yer both!' He chuckled; there was a significant click of a trigger; and My Lady found herself once more alone.

The Rector was standing on the steps, waiting. The man on the box was off, down, and making voluble explanations before My Lady had time to move.

'Missed Giles at t' turning, sir,' she heard him say, and recognised at once the voice of a well-known parishioner, a rough but by no means a low kind of fellow—respectable, hard working, and honest enough she had always accounted him.

'Lost our way in t' wood; very sorry, sir, I'm sure. Thought we'd niver get My Lady safe home. But she's noan t' worse, I hope!'

He opened the carriage door, let down the steps, and, stooping as though to move the rugs and make way for her, added quickly, in a low tone meant only for her ears:

'Say nowt, My Lady—'twill save, maybe, a life ye vally above your own!' She grasped his meaning.

'It shall be silence!' she whispered back.

'God bless ye,' returned the man earnestly; and, in faltering voice, he added, 'Twas my son ye tended in yonder!'

She stretched out a hand in the darkness, felt the rough edges of a piece of folded paper thrust into it, the impress of lips, and then she stepped down into the light to meet her uncle's comments.

He was too relieved to see her, too full of his own fears on her behalf to notice the details of her appearance. She kept her long cloak closely round her, concealing arms and hands within its folds, and listened patiently to the rapid questions poured upon her—so rapid, indeed, as to require no answer—and to diatribes on the insatiable love of amusement implanted in the feminine breast, which the worthy old Rector, too anxious to be rational, seized upon as the readiest explanation of the delayed home-coming. But at last her white face procured her dismissal, and in the seclusion of her own room she found an opportunity



to balance the courage and self-control that night's work had exacted from her by a passionate outburst of unrestrained tears.

### III.

All the ins and outs of the history My Lady never knew. She heard of the skirmish which had taken place midway between Eastbourne and Dewshaven from everyone she met; it was in all mouths. So daring a venture, so desperate a fight, ending in such a total absence of all clue to the offenders engaged therein, had not happened for years in the neighbourhood. She had from the Rector the detailed account of how he had sent the horses back with Giles for her, and how, after waiting hours, had been forced to make the best of his way home in the nearest publican's tax-cart; from Giles the history of his enticement into an inn on his journey to her, where he had presently become so fuddled as to be obliged to relinquish his reins to a neighbour.

(‘Drugged,’ was My Lady’s inward comment.)

All this, with apologies, explanations, and recriminations, she heard in silence. But her own knowledge she still kept to herself, as also the tiny slip of paper—the *billet-doux* of her adventure:—

2 Mi ladi

x 1. Pledg. x x x  
0 STRAY BULETS 2 Com 2 1 we wot of x x x

But from Captain McDougall she heard nothing, for the simple reason that for nearly a month after she never saw him. He neither came nor sent excuse. And the roses did not come back again, either, to My Lady’s cheeks. And always across the mirror of her mind would flit the memory of that sudden change of countenance she had marked in him. What could it have meant? Did it mean anything? Why did he not come? However, he did come. She was sitting alone, idle, her hands clasped loosely in her lap, her eyes staring listlessly in front of her, seeing nothing.

She told herself this unwonted lassitude, relaxation of mental and physical energy, depression, were only the natural effects of her adventure; but I think, though she would not own it, heart sickness was at the bottom of it all. She must have looked changed, for Captain McDougall started when he saw her; but he made no allusion to either her appearance or the last occasion



on which they had met. There seemed a veil between them. The conversation turned on ordinary topics; there were no confidences, exchange of theories, revelations of innermost hopes, aims, ambitions. Formality held the reins. At last he rose to go.

My Lady gave a little gasp. Would nothing break through this sudden upgrowth between them, this icy barrier? Would it always be like this?

He began making his adieux, turned to go, paused, returned a step or two. His eyes sought the ground, he traced a pattern on the carpet with his riding-whip.

'Will he not even *look at me?*' thought My Lady piteously. Her under lip quivered.

'I wanted to tell you,' he said, in a low, constrained voice, 'that last time I had the pleasure of seeing you——' He glanced up. She nodded comprehendingly, but her great black eyes began to dilate. 'You said,' he continued, with an effort; 'you—you had not the Rector with you, but a maid. You would not let me come near. I wanted to tell you,' he went on, 'that I—I saw in spite of it all, and you were not alone.'

My lady looked like a petrified piece of flesh and blood—staring miserably at him, her cheek colourless, her lips white.

'You need not have deceived me,' he said, jealousy and pent-up pain quickening in his voice. 'You might have taken the whole bevy of your—friends to escort you. I should not dare to presume to dictate, or criticise—no, not even in thought. But why should you deliberately tell me what was not true? It was not your maid I saw with you. Why did you tell me it was? Oh, My Lady, was it fair? Have I deserved it?'

She suddenly seemed to realise the situation from his standpoint, saw with his eyes, judged from his knowledge concerning it. And the understanding of how he might have interpreted the falsehoods she had undoubtedly told came home to her with crushing emphasis.

Her utter incapacity to excuse or exonerate herself—the impossibility of full explanation—the shame of being exposed in untruth without hope of clearing herself or her motives—all rushed upon her in an overwhelming tide.

She looked helplessly at him, while her beautiful black eyes gradually filled with a stony despair: her stiffening lips refused to utter a word in her defence. It seemed a lifetime as in imagination she saw her heart's dearest hopes slipping from her. The tension was too great.

All at once she burst into a flood of tears.

'Oh, Stuart!' she cried. '*I would have trusted you.*'

It was certainly a singular thing, but, go where he would in pursuit of his duty, never, during the remainder of his appointment at Rye, either as an unmarried or married man, did a bullet or cutlass-stroke find their way to Captain McDougall. And this in spite of the reckless courage, the determined zeal, the never-flagging energy with which he continued to wage war for his Government masters. People began to say he bore a charmed life.

But My Lady, his sweet wife, only smiles silently. She knows.

VIOLET A. SIMPSON.

## *A Road in Orcady.*

**I**N southern lands—and most lands are southern to us—the road runs between fragrant hedge-rows or under shady trees, but in Orcady trees and hedges are practically unknown. Yet the road lacks not its charm, for this is a world of compensations. If we never breathe the fragrance of the may or hear the whisper of wind-stirred branches, we have, on the other hand, nothing to shut out from our eyes the wide expanse of land and sea or to hide the blue sky over us; no fallen timber after a gale to block our way and make of our progress an involuntary obstacle race, and no thorns to puncture our cycle tyres. The lover of the highway may miss here much of the bird-life that enlivens the roads of the South, but our road has a life and traffic of its own quite apart from the trickling stream of men and horses which flows fitfully along its white channel. Flowers and flies, birds and beasts, the road has something for each and all of them. Even by day they use it, but from dusk to dawn they claim it as their very own.

I do not remember that Stevenson, who so loved the road, has written anywhere of its little life, of the birds and beasts, the shy living things that haunt it. In the treeless Isles of Orcady, at least, the furred and feathered creatures seem to think that man makes the road for their especial delectation. For all creatures of beach and bog, of hill and meadow, it has its charms, and hence it is ever beat upon by soft, soundless feet and shadowed by swiftly moving wings, and many a little comedy or tragedy is played out upon its stage. We walk upon it in spring and summer through an air fragrant with the perfume of innumerable small sweet flowers, with the music of birds and bees about us, and ever, under and behind all song, the voice of the great sea, full of indefinable mystery as of a half-remembered dream.

The engineer who makes the road unwittingly plans it in such fashion as to be of service to the folk of moor and marsh, of shore and furrow. In Orcady every road, sooner or later, leads to the sea. In

former days the sea itself was the great highway, and, therefore, close to its shores are found the old kirks and kirkyards. For by sea men came to worship God, and by sea they were carried to their long home. The kirks and kirkyards being beside the sea the road comes thither to them. It comes down also to the piers, the slips and jetties, which play so important a part in the lives of islanders. Thus the road passes within a few yards of the haunts of all the divers, swimmers, and waders that frequent our shores.

Also in making a road the aim of the man who plans it is to avoid, so far as possible, all ascents and descents. In carrying out this aim he raises the road on embankments where it passes through low and marshy grounds and makes cuttings through the higher lands. Where it runs through such a cutting the roadside ditches catch and keep a little store of water in a dry season, and thither plover, snipe, redshanks and dotterel bring their velvet-clad birdlings to drink. If the season be wet, the road raises above the marsh a comparatively dry platform, on which the birds may rest when not feeding, and the roadside dykes offer a shelter from wind and sun.

But our road draws feet and wings to it in many other ways. It passes now through cultivated fields, with dry stone dykes fencing it on either side; now it runs, unfenced, through the open moorland, and again along the very margin of the sea. Here it is bordered by marshes and there by a long reach of black peat-bog, and everywhere it woos with varied wiles the living things of earth and air. Before the dykes have seen many seasons they begin to deck themselves with velvet mosses, and to the miniature forests of the moss come insects of the lesser sorts, flying and creeping things, red and brown and blue. In pursuit of these 'small deer' come the spiders, which lurk in crevices of the walls and spread their cunning snares across the mouths of culverts where farm roads branch off from the highway. Long-legged water-skaters dart to and fro among the floating weeds on the surface of the stagnant ditches. And over these ditches the midges weave their fantastic dances on summer evenings. The litter of passing traffic brings hurrying, busy, burnished beetles, which find harbourage in the loosely piled banks of ditch scrapings that form the boundary between highway and moorland. Where the road, with its generous grassy margin, runs like a white ribbon with green borders through the brown moors, wild flowers, that are choked or hidden in the

heather, spread themselves to the sunshine, primroses and daisies, clover—red and white—milk-wort and tormentil, hawkweed and violets, thyme and crowfoot, their very names read like a poem. The number of small wild flowers that grow in our roadside ditches and within reach of the road is amazing when one begins to reckon them. Here the steep grassy bank is gorgeous with rose-campion and with purple and gold of the vetches, and all the air is sweet with the perfume of wild mustard which with the pale yellow of its blossoms almost hides the green in that field of springing barley. This wet meadow, on either hand all aglow with the pink blossoms of the ragged robin, a little earlier in the year had its wide and shallow ditches glorified by the broad green leaves and exquisite, feathery blooms of the bog-bean, while its drier grounds were starred with the pale cups of grass of Parnassus. In spring the vernal squills shone on yonder hillocks with a blue glory as of the sea in summer. On this long flat stretch of peat bog these are not untimely snow-drifts, but nodding patches of cotton-grass. In autumn, when a strong wind blows from that quarter, all the road will be strewn with the silvery, silken down that makes so brave a show among the purple heather of the bog. Later still in the year the same bog will glow ruddy as with a perpetual sunset, when the long, coarse grass reddens. Passing this way on some grey afternoon the wayfarer will find it hard to believe that the 'charmed sunset' has not suddenly shone out through the clouds 'low adown in the red west.' And the peat moss on which the road is built has other glories: green moss and moss as red as blood; fairy cups of silver lichen with scarlet rims, and long reaches of bog-asphodel, shining like cloth-of-gold, and sweetening the winds with their faint delicate perfume. Here, where our road runs on a firmer foundation, grow the wild willows, all low-growing and all adding a beauty to the year in their catkins. When the daisies have hardly ventured to thrust their heads into a cold world, the catkins gleam in silky silver, changing, as the days lengthen, to yellow gold. Later on some of them are covered with an exquisite white down, which floats their seeds about the land. The little burns which our road bridges, ripple and chatter through miniature forests of ferns and meadow-sweet; the foxglove shakes its bells above the splendour of the gorse and the yellow iris hides the young wild duck that are making their way by ditch and brooklet to the sea. These are but a few of the flowers with which the road garlands and bedecks herself to welcome the little peoples who love her.

To the flowers come all day long in summer the humble bees. These little reddish-yellow fellows, hot and angry looking, have their byke or nest in some mossy bank or old turf dyke, to which they carry wax and honey for the fashioning of a round, irregular, dirty-looking comb. The chances are that they will be despoiled of their treasure by some errant herd-boy before July is half over. Their great cousins in black velvet striped with gold prefer to live solitary in some deserted mouse-hole, but they cannot, for all their swagger and fierce looks, save their honey from Boy the Devourer. Though there are no wasps in Orcady, the roadside blossoms have visitors other than the bees. Here come white and brown butterflies, and those dainty little blue creatures whose wings are painted and eyed like a peacock's tail. And at night moths, white, yellow, and grey, flit like ghosts above the sleeping flowers, or dance mysteriously in the dusk on silent wings.

Where the insects come, there follow the insect-eaters. On a June evening there are parts of the road where one may see kittiwakes and black-headed gulls hawking for moths. Wheat-ears and starlings, larks and pipits, and, more rarely, thrushes, blackbirds, and wrens, with an occasional stonechat, all come to prey on the insect life of the road. Swallows there are none in Orcady, but the ubiquitous sparrow is there. To his contented mind the road offers a continual feast. When the birds set up housekeeping in spring, many of them choose their nesting-places in the near neighbourhood of the road. It seems almost as if they argued that here, under the very eye of man, they run less risk of discovery than further afield, where he may expect to find their treasures. From crannies of the loosely built walls that bound the road you may hear the hungry broods of starlings, sparrows, and wheat-ears chirping on every side as you pass in May. I have seen a nestful of young larks gape up with their foolish yellow throats from a tuft of grass on the very edge of a roadside ditch, and have found a grouse's nest in the heather not fifty yards from the most man-frequented part of the road. Yellow-hammers, too, and other buntings often nest in the long grass by the ditch-side. Here, in a hedge of whin or gorse which crosses the road at right angles, are the nests of the thrush, the blackbird, and the wren. If you drive along our road in spring you shall see the male pewit in all the glory of his wedding garments, scraping, a few yards from the roadside, the shallow, circular hollow in which his young are to be hatched; and a little later you shall see his patient spouse look up at you fearlessly from her eggs, or even, if your

passing be at noonday, you may watch her slip off the nest as her mate comes up behind to relieve her in her domestic duties. For these birds have learned that man on wheels is not to be feared, though man on foot is one of their most dreaded enemies.

In Orcady there are not many four-footed wild things, but those that dwell among us are drawn to the road as surely as the birds are. In the gloaming rabbits come down to the roadside clover where the bees have gathered honey all day. Great brown hares, too, come loping leisurely along the road, moving shadows that melt into the dusk at the least alarm. Hares always like to make their forms near a road of some sort, for it affords them a swift and ready means of flight when they are pursued. They must be hard pressed indeed before they will dive like rabbits into roadside drains or culverts, but these refuges are not to be despised when greyhound or lurcher is close upon their heels. Mice, voles, and rats find shelter in the banks of road-scrapings, or in the walls and drain-mouths, and the sea-otter does not despise the road when he makes a nocturnal expedition inland. It is not long since a man who was early afoot on a summer morning met a pair of otters almost on the street of our sleeping island capital. Seals, of course, cannot use the road, but where it runs by the sea-marge their shining heads rise up from the water to watch the passers-by, and he who is abroad before dawn may find them on the beaches within a few yards of the roadway.

The deer, roe, foxes, badgers, stoats, weasels, wild-cats, and moles of Orcady are even as the snakes of Iceland. Tame cats run wild, however, we do not lack, and they take their tithe from the road as surely as do the hawks and falcons. Neither snakes, lizards, nor frogs are found in the Isles, but on a damp autumn evening the road is dotted with toads of all sizes, which sit gazing into infinity or hop clumsily from before the passing wheel.

In pursuit of beetles, mice, and small birds, hawks and owls come to the road. The kestrel of all hawks loves it the most. He sits upon the humming telegraph wires or hangs poised, like Mahomet's coffin, in mid-air, ever watchful and ready to swoop down upon his prey. The same wires which give him a resting-place often furnish him with food, ready killed or disabled. When first man set up his posts along the road and threaded them with an endless wire, sad havoc was wrought among the birds. Plover—green and golden—snipe, redshanks and grouse dashing across the road in the dusk, struck the fatal wires and fell dead or maimed by the wayside. I have seen a blackbird fly shrieking



from a prowling cat, and strike the wire with such force that his head, cut clean off, dropped at my very feet. The older birds appear to have learned a lesson from the misfortunes of their fellows, but every autumn young birds, new to their wings, pay their tribute of victims to the wires. More especially is this the case with the plovers, and, though the kestrel rarely touches so big a bird when it is whole and sound, he feasts upon their wounded. The hen-harrier skims to and fro along the roadside ditches, but he is a wary and a cautious fowl, and is never within gun-shot of the road when man comes down that way. The merlin, that beautiful miniature falcon, glides swift and low across the moors and meadows, flashes suddenly over the roadside dyke, and before the small birds have time to realise that their enemy is upon them, he is gone again, only a little puff of feathers floating slowly down the air, showing where he struck his prey. The peregrine wheels high over head, but is too proud and shy a bird to hunt upon man's roads. Nor has the road any charm for the raven, who goes croaking hoarsely over it on his way from shore to hill. The little short-eared owls hide all day among the heather near our road, and come flapping up in the gloaming on noiseless wings to take their share of its good things. In the treeless islands the kestrel is not the only bird that sits upon the wires. There the starling sings his weird love-song, mingling with his own harsh notes the calls of every other bird that the islands know. There, too, the linnets that come down to the roadside thistles sit in long rows like threaded beads. And the buntings, 'mimsy' as was ever any 'borogove,' chant their lugubrious and monotonous ditties there.

The telegraph-wires are not the only mysterious works of man which have disturbed and interfered with the feathered life so near to and yet so far apart from his. What a mystery must he be to these fellow-creatures who watch him, with his continual scratching and patching of the breast of kindly Mother Earth! Not wholly does he yield the road to them between sunset and sunrise; but when he goes abroad in the dark it is often in the guise of a rumbling dragon with great eyes of flame. Once, to the writer's knowledge, a gannet swooped down in valiant ignorance on such a horrid creature of the night. He flashed suddenly, white out of the darkness, into the circle of light of a doctor's gig lamps. That bold bird his fellows saw no more, and one may fancy that with his disappearance a new terror was added to the fiery-eyed creatures that roam the roads by night. He died,

though not without a fierce fight for his life, and his skin, cunningly filled out with wire and straw, stands under a glass-case in his slayer's home even unto this day.

It is in spring and summer that the road sets forth its choicest lures for its lovers, yet even in 'winter and rough weather' it has its beauties for the seeing eye. The puddles and cart-ruts shine like dull silver when the clouds are heavy and grey overhead. When the rain-cloud blows over and the sky clears these same shallow pools and channels gleam with a cold clear blue more exquisite than that of the heavens they reflect, and at night the stars besprinkle them with diamonds. Again :

Autumnal frosts enchant the pool,  
And make the cart-ruts beautiful.

'When daisies go'—and of all roadside blossoms they linger latest and reappear earliest (I have seen them lifting their modest crimson-tipped heads in December and opening their yellow eyes before the coltsfoot stars begin to shine)—but even when they are gone the grey stone dykes have still a glory of green moss, of grey and golden lichens.

When all the land is soaked and sodden with heavy rains, the road, where it climbs that low brown hill, will suddenly shine out across the intervening miles like a sword flung down among the heather.

When the winter rains have given place to the first snowfall of the year, go out early in the morning, before hoofs and wheels have blotted out the traces of the night, and you shall learn, as nothing else save long and close observation can teach you, how great is the nocturnal traffic of birds and beasts upon the road. Like fine lace-work you shall find their footprints, to and fro, round and across, up the middle and down again. Hares and rabbits, rats and mice, gulls and plovers, thrushes and larks, water-hens and water-rails, these and many more have been busy here while you slept. And even now bright eyes are watching you, themselves unseen—those unsuspected eyes which are ever upon us as we follow the road on our daily round of duty or pleasure. Do they look on us with fear or wonder, with contempt or admiration, or with a mingling of all these feelings? That we can never know while the great barrier of silence stands between us and them. We blunder across their lives, doing them good and evil indiscriminately, but we understand them no more than they can understand us.

Now, in winter, new birds come to our road. Great flocks of snow-buntings, circling and wheeling with marvellous precision, at one moment almost invisible, a dim, brown, moving mist, and the next flashing a thousand points of silver to the level rays of the wintry sun. Scores of green-finches, which we never see in summer, rise from the road edges to circle a little way and settle again. The 'spink\*spink' of the chaffinch, also unknown to us in summer, may now be heard, fieldfares spring chuckling through the air far overhead, and red-winged thrushes hop among the stubbles. Down this shallow pass between the low hills come in the gloaming the lines of the wild swans, flying from the upland lochs to the sea. Their trumpet calls ring far through the frosty air, and as we hear them there stir within us vague thoughts and dreams of the white North whence they came. As if answering the thought, the wet road shines through the dusk with a new, faint, unearthly light, as flickering up the northern sky come the pale, shifting streamers of the Aurora Borealis.

Of the human life that pulses intermittently along our road there is not space here and now to write. Boy and girl, youth and maiden, man and woman, day by day, year in, year out, they follow the winding line, till for each in turn the day comes when it leads them to the kirkyard or to the sea, and the roads of Orcady know them no more.

DUNCAN J. ROBERTSON.

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

THE whole country, without exception, has mourned not so much for the death of Mr. Gladstone, since death in extreme old age is no misfortune, but for the sufferings which were so bravely borne. This is no place for politics, but one may add one's trifling testimony to the others as concerning the charm of Mr. Gladstone's manners and conversation. Nothing could be simpler, more pleasant, less assuming, or more winning. It was my chance to hear Mr. Gladstone speak chiefly about Homer. The future historian will find that his writings on Homeric and Biblical criticism strangely illustrate the peculiarities of his intellectual character. On these topics he was of the eighteenth century, untouched by the irruption of the scientific spirit into literary discussion. To be sure, as regards Homer, he reminded one of an ingenious German critic, carrying his ingenuities, and his ideas of evidence, into the opposite, the Conservative, camp. It was not that Mr. Gladstone showed at his best in these non-political fields, but in them he most curiously displayed his natural bent, least trammelled by practical conditions, and least swayed by popular demands. Here, too, he was least persuasive, using the pen, and not his great instrument of persuasion, the living voice. Here, also, he remained the unbending Tory, and resolute *contra mundum*.

\* \* \*

The great antiquity of Mr. Gladstone is made more real, to our fancy, by certain synchronisms. He was senior to Arthur Hallam. He was twenty-three when Scott died, whereas friends of mine who remember Sir Walter were but children of eight or nine in 1832. Mr. Gladstone had been reviewed by Macaulay. If Poe had been gifted with a constitution like Mr. Gladstone's, Poe might have been living yet. The statesman was of full legal age at the date of the Reform Bill. He remembered Wellington in his political prime, and knew Lockhart. He had lived under

four English sovereigns, and a Regency. He read the Waverley Novels as they came out, and reviewed *Robert Elsmere*. He was contemporary with negro slavery in our colonies, and prior to the age of railways, and of telegraphs, and of photographs. He had seen in France the First Empire, the Restoration, the Bourgeois Monarchy, a Republic, the Second Empire, and the Republic of to-day. He was about fifty when Evolution came in, and he wrote a book on *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* after that irruption. His life was nearly contemporary with times modern; his *Memoirs* embraced modern history as commonly understood—the new times. The old times ended with George IV. and a statesmanlike consumption of port. The statesmen who consumed it died young.

\* \* \*

When I cease to be, I hope that Mr. George Meredith will not write my dirge, at least if his dirge on Mr. Gladstone is correctly cited in *The Academy*:

A splendid image built of man has flown,  
His deeds inspired of God outstep a Past.  
Ours the great privilege to have had one  
Among us who celestial tasks has done.

The Apollo Belvedere is 'a splendid image built of man,' but it could not fly, and one is not sure of the meaning of deeds that 'outstep a Past.' Jeames's advice to poets, to be 'puffickly' sure of what they mean, and then to say it as plainly as possible, seems to be neglected.

\* \* \*

A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* is severe on 'The Young Lions,' who are puffed 'as if they were on the staff of the Dissenting press.' They live, thinks this censor, by writing paragraphs about each other, and have invented the Public Dinner puff. The Bounding Bohemians dine together, and their speeches about each other are reported. Why reported, except for purposes of *reclame*? The old Rabelais Club dined, but made no speeches, and no reporters were present. The Club did not exhilarate, and seemed to meet more in the vein of admirers of Young's *Night Thoughts* than of Pantagruel. Certainly advertisement is carried to great lengths, but I think that more might be done. A leaf might be taken from the book of the vendors of pills and soap.

\* \* \*

Thus a new novel appears. You start advertising it on placards along the lines of railway from Thurso to London. You put a brief summary of the most exciting situations on posters in the fields beside the main lines, and the traveller picks up fragments which keenly excite his curiosity. Any one can see how this would work out in the case of Mr. Anthony Hope's *Rupert of Hentzau*, though one need not say that Mr. Hope is the last person to approve of the method. Still, it would be vastly exciting, and much more agreeable than the monotony of soap and pills. A joy would be added to travel, a charm to landscape, and how a work thus advertised would sell! But I want to know how Rupert missed Rudolf in the garret, and why Rupert, when he saw that Rudolf meant to make him shoot himself, did not fire off the barrels of the revolver into the air? This was an obvious expedient. But possibly Mr. Hope will explain all that in a later number; meanwhile the legend is of palpitating interest, in the *Pall Mall Magazine*. I pine to know whether Rudolf set up as a king for good and all, but fear that the story will not 'end well.'

\* \* \*

Aristotle, sneering at the Athenian public, remarks that they liked tragedies to end happily. We owe this innovation in England to the good-natured monarch Charles II. He insisted that tragedies should come to a happy conclusion, as may be read in Mr. Courthope's *Life of Addison*. There was trouble enough in real life, his Majesty thought. His letters to Clarendon prove that he hated hanging people, if he could possibly get them off. However, he hardened his heart in the case of Argyll, which shows how very tiresome Argyll must have been. That tragedy had not a fortunate conclusion.

\* \* \*

The 'Memorials of Murray of Broughton,' published by the Scottish History Society, and edited by Mr. Fitzroy Bell, are an extraordinary exhibition of human nature. Mr. Murray determined to buy his life by turning King's evidence as soon as he was captured. The rest of his life was passed in deserved infamy, and in writing apologies for his conduct, which now for the first time see the light. We observe the man desperately trying to wriggle back into his own good opinion. He could have betrayed so many people that he wonders at his own moderation. Besides, many of his old allies, for one reason or other, richly deserved

to be betrayed. He was only doing justice on bad Jacobites. For himself, the traitor clearly remained of all Jacobites the most enthusiastic. Thus the strange story that Prince Charles, after 1766, visited his old Secretary in London, and was introduced to his little boy, later the actor, may be true after all. Murray may have won his pardon, a thing which always hitherto seemed impossible. He had been a most energetic, clear-headed, and valuable servant. The little slip of turning King's evidence was pardoned, for the sake of a devotion which remained as fervent as ever. One thinks of the horrible conflict, and torturing shame, and braggart vanity in the mind of this wretched Judas. The novelist will find his materials ready in Mr. Fitzroy Bell's book, and others will recognise a tissue of moral impossibilities, which, though matters of actual fact, are really too improbable for fiction. It is 'the improbable possible,' to which Aristotle preferred 'the probable impossible.'

\* \* \*

In some letters of 1749 I have read that Murray challenged one of his victims, Lord Traquair, and strutted about in a cloak behind Montague House in expectation of a meeting. Lord Traquair did not cross swords with him; it was not probable. This was one of Murray's devices for recovering his self-respect; Mr. Bell does not, I think, refer to the affair. Some of Murray's victims, as Traquair and Dr. Barry, lied frankly, and denied his stories when examined. In a more manly fashion Sir John Douglas merely declined to answer any questions, which served just as well, there being only one witness. What became of the beautiful Mrs. Murray remains a mystery. It is clear enough that she did not join the Prince abroad, as legend avers, and she was with her husband as late as 1749. Mr. Bell appears to have overlooked this circumstance, which is proved by the story of Leslie's pawning Mrs. Murray's repeater in the interest of the starving Glengarry. Mrs. Murray was angry, Leslie justified himself, and his letter has been published. The Scottish History Society and Mr. Fitzroy Bell are to be congratulated on such a 'find' as these extraordinary Memorials. Their author is said to have died mad, a thing not to be reckoned a marvel.

\* \* \*

Students of sentiment know the poet Haynes Bayly, the sweet singer of *Gaily the Troubadour*. But the world has forgotten



F. W. N. Bayley, Esq., a close imitator of the Master, rejoicing in a similar surname, and practising 'that untradesman-like falsehood,' 'the same concern.' Here follows a lyric of Mr. Bayley, 'the melody by Bishop,' sung by the famed Madame Vestris. The song merits attentive perusal as a 'human document.'

\* \* \*

*I STOOD AMID THE GLITTERING THRONG.*

I stood amid the glittering throng.  
I heard a voice, its tones were sweet ;  
I turned to see from whence they came,  
And gaz'd on all I longed to meet ;

She was a fair and gentle girl,  
Her bright smile greeted me by chance ;  
I whisper'd low ! I took her hand !  
I led, I led her forth to dance !

There was but little space to move,  
So close, so closely all were drawn ;  
Yet she was light of heart and step,  
And graceful, graceful as a fawn ;

A virgin flower gemm'd her hair,  
Her beauty, her beauty to enhance ;  
She was the star of all who *stood*,  
Who *stood*, in that close Cottage Dance ;

I've mov'd since then in princely halls,  
I tread, I tread them even now ;  
I hold in mine the hand of one,  
Of one with coroneted brow ;

And I may seem to court her smile,  
And seem to heed, to heed her glance ;  
But my heart and thoughts still wander home  
To that, to that sweet Cottage Dance ;

Oft when I sleep a melody  
Comes rushing, rushing on my brain ;  
And the light music of that night  
Is greeting, greeting me again ;

I take her still small hand in mine,  
 Amid my blissful, my blissful trance;  
 And once more, once more, vision worth a world!  
 I lead, I lead her forth to dance.

F. W. N. BAYLEY.

\* \* \*

Observe her 'still small *hand*,' whereas we are better accustomed to 'a still small *voice*.' Remark that, in the cottage dance they *stood*, they did not gyrate, which is usual in dancing. A note in prose informs us that, like 'Oh, no! we never mention her' (by the Master himself), this ballad is 'the result of feeling on the part of its author.'

\* \* \*

'Mr. B. is said to have written it on his return from a soirée (*swarry*) near Portman Square'—'I've moved since then in princely halls'—'after galloping with a certain illustrious person in the exclusive coterie, and the young lady alluded to is said to be the lovely and amiable recluse of a cottage *orné*, in the vicinity of Cheltenham.' All this is fairly explicit and very delightful. They understood the art of advertisement pretty well, about 1840. Sentiment was simple, snobbish, and not at all shame-faced fifty years ago. Mr. Bayley lets us know that he frequents exclusive and coroneted ones, though he does not forget fair and amiable cottaged recluses. This, indeed, as a 'document' of the old snobbishness is probably unmatched. And it was set to music by Bishop, and sung by Madame Vestris! Addison, after writing an unsuccessful opera, learned that only nonsense can be wedded to music, a discovery made first in his own day, and since persistently carried into practice. The piece by Mr. Bayley 'created a great sensation at the evening concert of Lady —,' says the author of the prose note.

\* \* \*

There is another sweet personal thing by the genuine T. H. Bayly:

'They tell thee to doubt me,  
 And think of me no more,  
 They say I have sported  
 With female hearts before;  
 But when you hear unkind ones speak  
 With venom'd tongue and smiling cheek,  
 Repel them;  
 And tell them  
 I have been true to thee!'

The Master *has* sported with female hearts before—he makes no secret of the circumstance, but now he turns over a new leaf. This personal character of his ditties must have given Mr. Bayly the social vogue of Byron. Now, like Byron (in spite of two or three new editions), Bayly is neglected; he needs a new edition, and an accomplished Editor, and quarrels of the learned over Bayly as over Burns. But nothing can really restore the bloom, the matchless bloom, of Bayly's early Victorian cheek.

\* \* \*

The squire in a novel of George Eliot's fancied that cock-fighting was a humane concession to the natural instincts of the birds. A similar opinion was held by the Rev. William Chafin, author of *Cranbourn Chase* (1818). This curious little book, rare probably, was dear to Scott, who wished to review it in the *Quarterly*. But he discovered that Mr. Chafin's relatives thought the less said the better, so he abstained. Mr. Chafin says that 'in our days of refinement cock-fighting is deemed to be barbarous and cruel, but in this respect the writer thinks differently, and believes it to be the least so of any diversions now in vogue, and nothing equal in cruelty to horse-racing. It is an indulgence of natural propensities,' and the spurs, by ending the battle promptly, act a kind and humane part. In a farm known to me, there was a battle of late between the old sultan and a much smaller fowl. The old bird was defeated, though not much hurt, and died next day of a broken heart, as unable to survive disgrace. Mr. Chafin censures pugilism, fashionable in his day, and prefers duelling, where 'artificial weapons only' are employed. Therefore cock-fighting, with steel spurs, is moral, otherwise not so. A sword thrust, he argues, cannot be so painful as a blow with the fist. The first regular foxhounds in the west, Mr. Chafin says, were established by Mr. Fownes, of Stepleton, in Dorset. Perhaps Squire Western rode to these hounds. In Yorkshire only harriers had been in vogue. Even as late as 1775, to judge by the Badminton book, hare-hunting was much more prevalent than fox-hunting. Before 1730, in Dorset, the hounds pursued 'all the animals promiscuously, except the deer.' One had supposed that fox-hunting was much more antique than it seems to be.

\* \* \*

Since writing of miniatures, last month, I have encountered one with a singular history. It is an exquisite portrait of Boileau,

in enamel, and was given, at the sack of the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China, by a French private to a distinguished British officer. The miniature must have been carried to China, as a present from Louis XIV., by the Embassy of the Grand Monarque. The idea would be to show the Chinese ruler what the French mandarins were like. Luckily it fell into the best possible hands, and is now set in diamonds. A persistent critic in *Literature* seems to regard Boileau as a true representative of French poetry, which he finds prosaic. I cannot agree, nor do I think that a poet in *Literature* is well inspired when he makes 'arm' rhyme to 'calm.' Nay, nor did Miss Ingelow write 'All in the blue unclouded weather,' a line which occurs in that rare piece, *The Lady of Shalott*, by Lord Tennyson.

\* \* \*

Another relic has had a story almost as odd as that of Boileau's miniature. This object of art is a huge bronze door-knocker, representing Neptune brandishing his trident between two sea horses; the shaft of the trident is missing. A friend of mine found the bronze in a house in Wales. Now my friend's father had a story of a rowdy old schoolfellow of his own, who came to hold a commission in the British army. Meeting the officer's father, one day, many years ago, my friend's father asked for news of his school friend. 'He has left the army, and brought home a door-knocker from Corfu,' was the reply. The knocker had been the apple of the eye of a Greek merchant, who attributed it to Benvenuto Cellini—wrongly. These were the days of knocker-snatching, and all the young officers in Corfu had taken shots at this example, but it was firmly imbedded in the merchant's door. On the day when our officer left Corfu, he noticed some heavy baggage waggons going down the street. A great idea occurred to him. He procured a stout rope, tied it round the coveted knocker, and made the other end fast to a waggon. The waggon, advancing, tore out the knocker, with which the youth fled to England. The merchant asked that a frigate should be sent to pursue him. This was not done, the rape of the knocker was completed, but the youth did not keep his commission. This tale was familiar to my friend, so his joy may be conceived, when he found, and secured, the historical bronze, without the trident, which had been broken in the very moment of triumph.

\* \* \*

'To cultivate the people of Dundee' is a hopeless endeavour according to Mr. Murray, the regretted poet of St. Andrews. But from Mr. A. H. Millar's edition of the 'Compt Buik' of David Wedderburn, a Dundee merchant about 1600, this was not always so. Dundee, about 1600, was 'cultured.' Wedderburn had an Ovid 'in ane swynes skin of wery braw binding;' and was confiding enough to lend it to a Balfour of Mountquhany, in spite of what Knox says concerning the honesty of that family. Wedderburn had also four books of the Iliad, and a 'Vergile,' and Plutarch in Latin, gilt, and Quintilian. Does any Burgess of Dundee pore on Quintilian to-day, or read 'a Hebrew Bybele'? Wedderburn used to lend his books very freely, no doubt with the proverbial consequences. He lent to young Peter Wedderburn *Dr. Faustus*, and his Chaucer was borrowed by the goodwife of Pitlathy. The *Faustus* probably was that of 1588, containing Marlowe's materials, or perhaps it was Marlowe's own famous drama. I suppose the book of 'Walking Spirits' is that by Lavaterus; 'Lavaretus,' Mr. Millar prints it erroneously; perhaps it is 'Lavaretus' in the English translation; somebody has borrowed my copy. It speaks of 'strange Noyses, Crackes, and sundrie Forewarnynges.' A friend of mine lately found, in more than one part of the Highlands, that a light was kept burning in the carpenters' shops. There was always a knocking in the place when a coffin was needed, light or no light. Recent researches of the Folk Lore Society show that Galloway ghosts are equally noisy. It is a very old belief, but first-hand evidence to facts is needed. Wedderburn believed firmly that there are '33 evil days in the year.' Thirty-three seems an understatement. Wedderburn records the eclipse of 1597, which frightened the people of Dundee very much. Protestants like Calderwood thought it had something to do with the Kirk. Wedderburn, not being a Presbyterian, was 'more than usual calm,' and, like pet Marjory's hen, 'did not give a single damn.' He was ingenious enough to spell the staple of Dundee as 'marmblade' for 'marmalade,' and got it from Spain. Now they make it at Dundee, and make it very well. Wedderburn seems to have lent everybody everything, down to a cage for a lark, and a lock for a door! The book is full of matter for the student of society and commerce, and has an exemplary Introduction by Mr. Millar. Let us hope that Dundee, in spite of the St. Andrews poet, has many burgesses who study as widely as good David Wedderburn. The book is published by

the Scottish History Society, and Wedderburn spelled his name 'Wedderburne.'

\* \* \*

The Bastille, judging by M. Funck-Brentano's new book, seems to have been a pleasant hermitage enough. 'It was the *prison de luxe*, and rich men lived richly. Poor prisoners received an allowance, and often made a small fortune out of their economies. One gentleman solaced his captivity by the care of a pretty English girl, with whom he had eloped. On May 22, 1693, a Mr. Jones, an Englishman, gave himself up as a prisoner, nobody knows why. Great care was to be taken of him. Probably he was mixed up with the intrigues of Louis XIV. for the restoration of James II. The Comte de Belle Isle had an excellent library in his 'dungeon.' People who turned out to have been unjustly detained were indemnified: Voltaire got a pension. Many prisoners were allowed to walk about where they pleased, and to play bowls in the garden. Of two brothers who were prisoners, only one need stay in seclusion at a time, the other might take his walks abroad. The dinners were excellent and abundant. One prisoner found his first meal good, but simple. He had eaten his servant's supper by accident, and had no appetite left for his own, when it arrived! The King intended to destroy the Bastille, leaving only one tower, with his statue pointing to the ruin. The mob managed otherwise, and all free hearts beat quicker, as if a furious abuse had been destroyed. The place, in fact, had an ill name, because of its secrecy, and the arbitrariness of the detentions. We find Henry Goring afraid of 'that dreadful Bastille,' in 1754. But it was really quite a *prison de luxe*; only there were instances of people who had got in, nobody could tell why or wherefore. This was awkward, of course. The Man in the Iron Mask is said, dubiously, not to be Monmouth, or Molière, or a brother of Louis XIV., but Mattioli, a person of little romantic interest. The few prisoners found when the place fell were forgers, lunatics, and one scoundrel of good family, who had deserved hanging. The state prison, in fact, was a harmless survival. The real hells were Bicêtre, and the awful den called Galbanon, which we hear of in the letters of Macallister, who had seen the place in the capacity of a prison spy. M. Funck-Brentano's book is based on the extant documents of the Bastille. It will have no effect on popular tradition, but it is full of interest.

ANDREW LANG.

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